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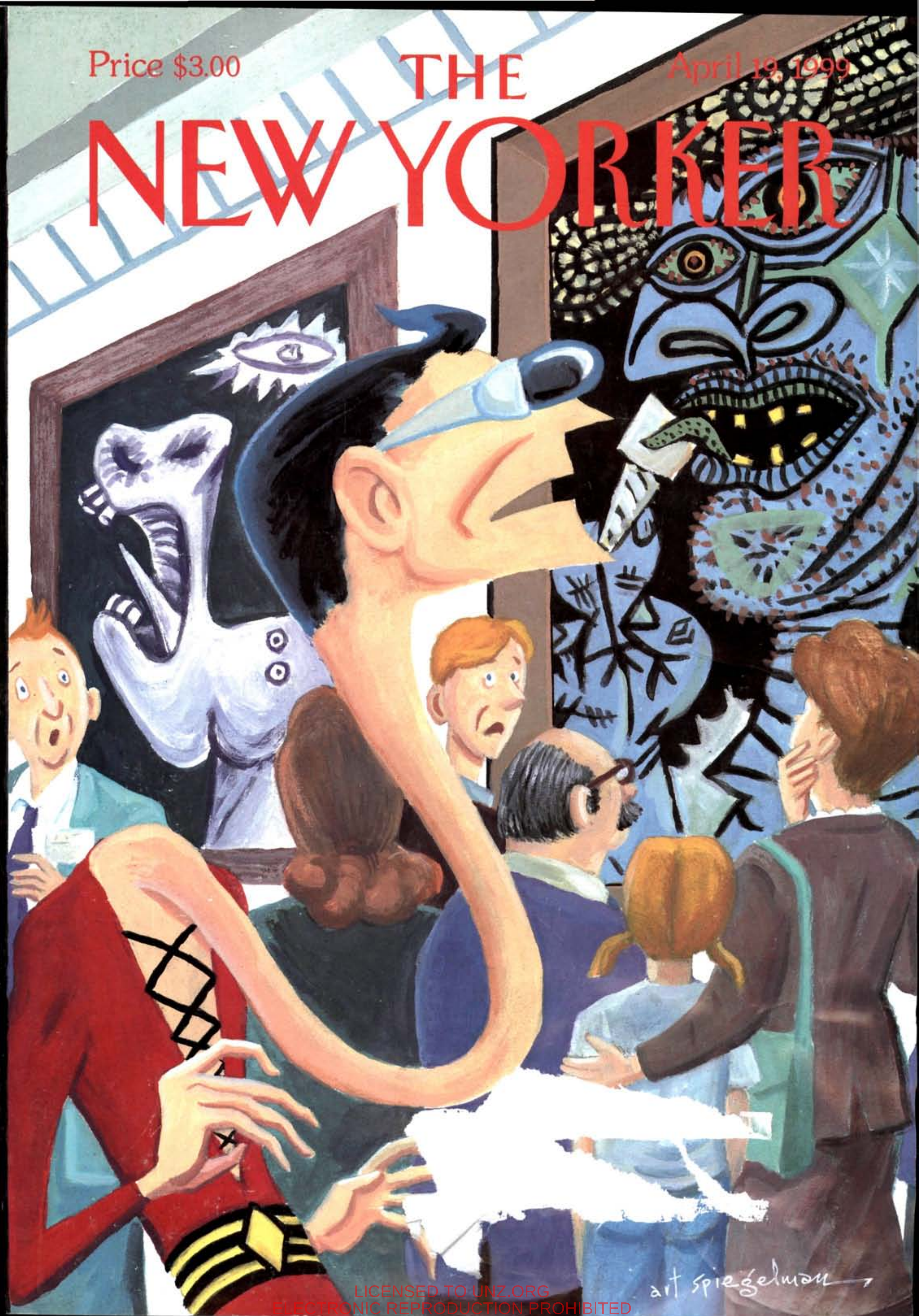
THE NEW YORKER

April 19, 1999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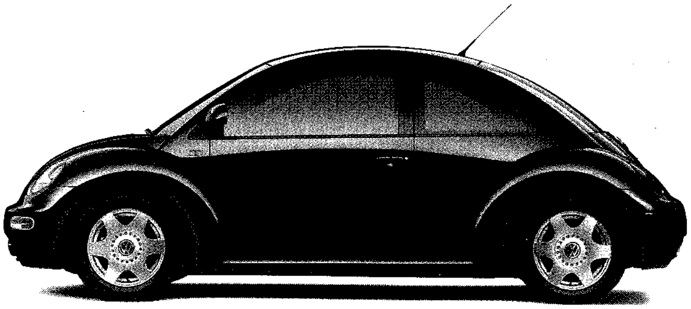

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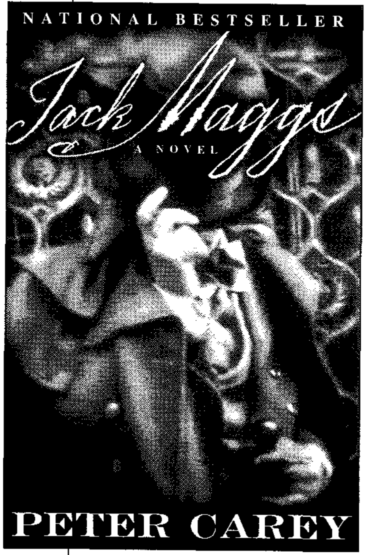

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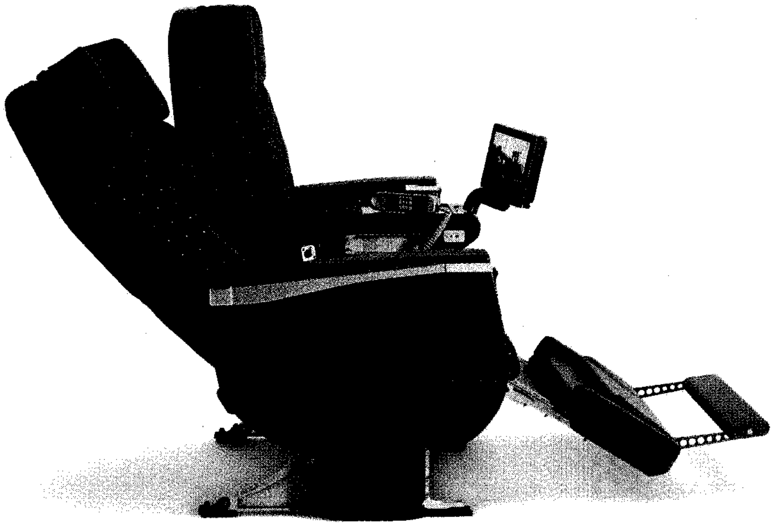

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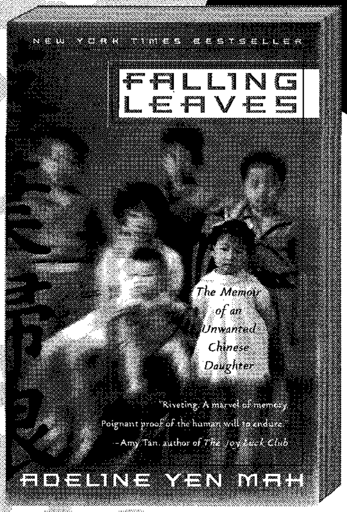
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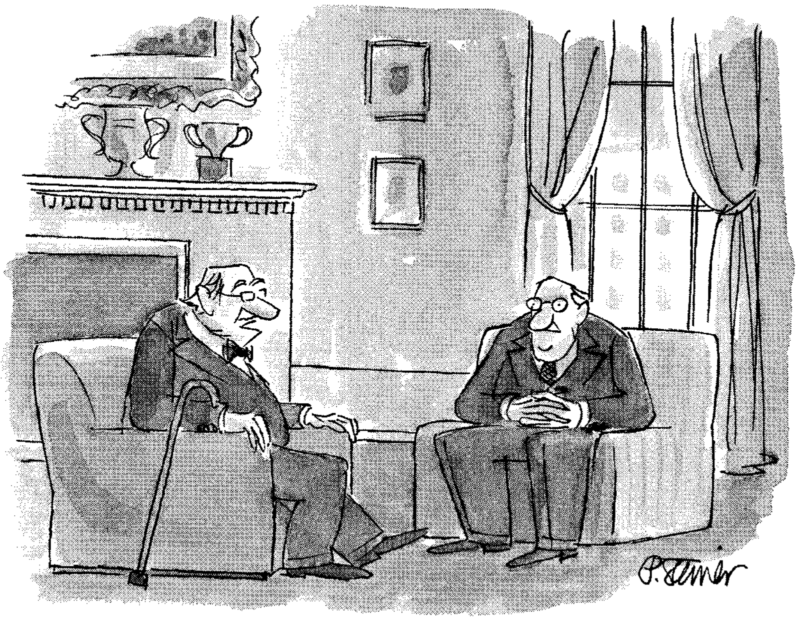

"The Balkans. This is where I came in."

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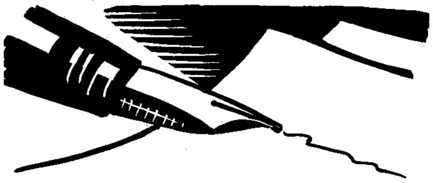

TENNESSEE'S PUBLISHERS

When it became apparent, much to Tennessee Williams's surprise, that his play "The Glass Menagerie" was fated for success, he realized he had an obligation to Bennett Cerf, the publisher at Random House. At a time when Tennessee was desperate for money, Cerf had loaned him a hundred dollars with the proviso that Random House could publish his next play. Cerf thus put out the first editions of "The Glass Menagerie," but he also recognized the playwright's close association with another editor, James Laughlin. Laughlin's pioneering publishing house, New Directions, published hundreds of experimental writers whom other publishers would not have touched, and Laughlin won the affection and loyalty of Williams, who chose New Directions to publish his plays, poems, short stories, and essays. Cerf wrote a note assuring Tennessee, "I understand that all future works of yours will be published by New Directions, and I appreciate Mr. Laughlin's attitude in this matter." Thirty years later, Michael Korda ("That's It, Baby," March 22nd), at Simon & Schuster, published Williams's "Moise and the World of Reason," a lesser work that Laughlin had found unsuitable. Like Cerf's, Korda's association with Williams was mercifully brief. Korda's gratuitous dismissal of New Directions as "a small press" would be ludicrous were it not insulting to the memory of James Laughlin. In the month of his death, Williams was unable to attend an award ceremony honoring Laughlin, but he did write a tribute: "It was James Laughlin in the beginning and it remains James Laughlin now, with never a disruption or moment of misunderstanding in a friendship and professional relationship that has now lasted for forty years or more."

LYLE LEVERICH
San Rafael, Calif.

DYEING FOR HIS ART

Among the millions of people captivated by the ads for Clairol hair dye described by Malcolm Gladwell ("True Colors," March 22nd) was the British artist David Hockney. In the summer of 1961, Hockney was an unknown artist recently arrived in America. When he heard the "Blondes have more fun" advertising campaign which said that doors open for a blonde, he promptly went out, bought a bottle, and dyed his hair. He then produced an aquatinted etching, "The Start of the Spending Spree and the Door Opening for a Blonde," which shows a blond Hockney approaching a door leading to a picture of a beach with palm trees. As a gay man bent on coming out in his art, Hockney advertised the dyeing of his own hair to signify his crossing and blurring of the gender line. He himself becomes the "blonde" for whom the door is opening.

JAMES HEFFERNAN
Professor of English, Dartmouth College
Hanover, N.H.

THE GREAT SHIRT DEBATE

While I number myself among those who would employ caution in challenging the estimable George Plimpton on the subject of Brooks Brothers dress shirts, I was provoked by his critique, in Rebecca Mead's "Brooks Brothers A-Go-Go" (March 22nd), of the newer shirts that "puff up around the tie." At school in Cambridge in 1952, I was advised by the multigenerational New Englanders in residence that the Brooks "roll" was considered an essential and classic collar configuration. In order to test my memory, I recently found a fifty-year-old shirt made by Brooks. When I put it on, I discovered that the collar buttons had indeed been strategically placed to puff the collar, imparting to the wearer a nonchalant style of intended sloppiness.

JAMES HIGSON
Newport Beach, Calif.

•

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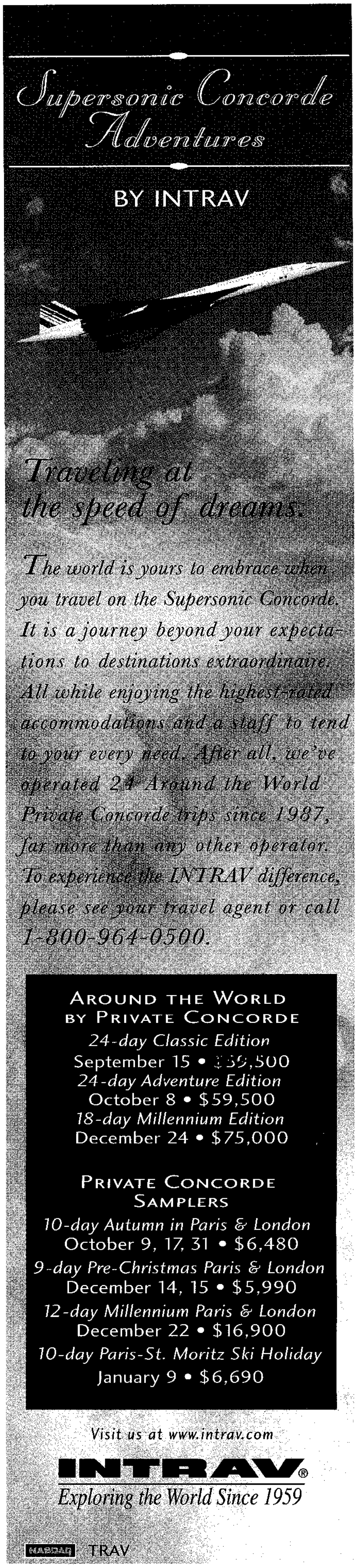

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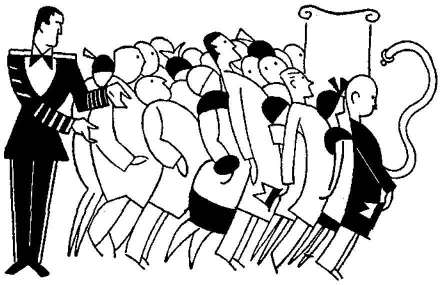

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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18	19	20				

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

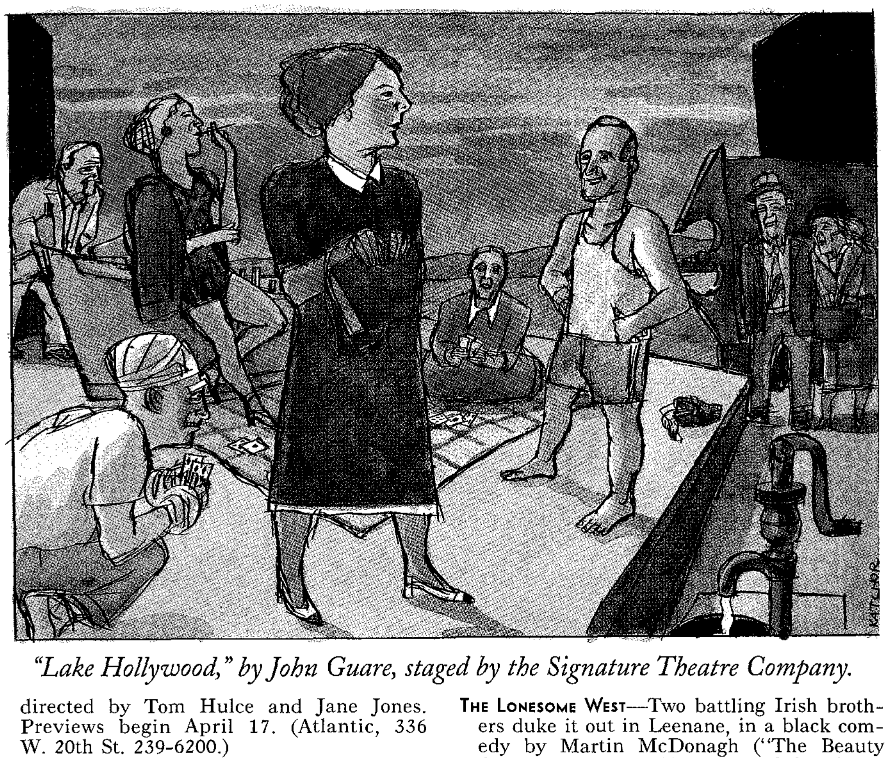
(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Amy's View—Dame Judi Dench portrays a distinguished West End actress, in a recent drama by David Hare. Directed by Richard Eyre. Two previews on April 14. Opens April 15 at 6:30. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Angel Street—Patrick Hamilton's 1938 thriller, on which the film "Gaslight" was based. In previews. (Pearl, 80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

Brigadoon—A Village Light Opera Group staging of the 1947 Lerner and Loewe musical. April 17 at 8 and April 18 at 2. Continues through April 24. (Haft Auditorium, Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. 279-4200.)

The Cider House Rules, Part I: Here in St. Cloud's—Colm Meaney, Josh Hamilton, and Jillian Armenante star in Peter Parnell's adaptation of the John Irving novel. Codirected by Tom Hulce and Jane Jones. Previews begin April 17. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 239-6200.)



"Lake Hollywood," by John Guare, staged by the Signature Theatre Company.

The Civil War—The musical. Frank Wildhorn wrote the music and book. Jerry Zaks is the director. In previews. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Dream True—The Vineyard Theatre presents a musical that follows the lifelong relationship of two boyhood friends, with music by Ricky Ian Gordon and lyrics and book by Tina Landau. Opens April 14 at 8. (108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

The English Teachers—A comedy-drama by Edward Napier, set in West Virginia in 1960. In previews. (MCC Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

Exactly Like You—Cy Coleman wrote the music and A. E. Hotchner the book for this new musical, a courtroom comedy involving four couples, staged by the York Theatre Company. Opens April 14 at 6:30. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

The Gershwins' Fascinating Rhythm—A revue celebrating the songs of George and Ira Gershwin. Mark Lamos is the director. In previews. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

H.M.S. Pinafore—The Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, in a Blue Hill Troupe production. April 16-17 at 8 and April 18 at 3. Continues through April 24. (John Jay Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St. 988-2012.)

Lake Hollywood—The Signature Theatre Company wraps up its John Guare season with a new work by the playwright. Ralph Waite and Kate Burton lead the cast. In previews. (555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

Lips—A new political comedy by Constance Congdon, in which a convicted computer hacker becomes involved in a plot to bring down the first female President. In previews. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

The Lonesome West—Two battling Irish brothers duke it out in Leenane, in a black comedy by Martin McDonagh ("The Beauty Queen of Leenane"). Directed by Garry Hynes. Previews begin April 19. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Never on Friday—Israeli cantor turned singing star Dudu Fisher performs songs and tells stories, in an autobiographical one-man show. Presented by the Jewish Repertory Theatre. Previews begin April 17. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Ring Round the Moon—Lincoln Center Theatre presents Christopher Fry's 1950 adaptation of Anouilh's comedy "L'Invitation au Château." Gerald Gutierrez is the director. In previews. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Shadow of a Gunman—Sean O'Casey's 1923 drama, his first produced play, about a poet who is mistaken for a criminal on the lam. Preview on April 14. Opens April 15 at 7. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Still/Waiting for Lefty—Clifford Odets' 1935 labor-movement drama, "Waiting for Lefty," in an adaptation by Shira Piven. Previews April 14-17. Opens April 18 at 8. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 330-7166.)

The Stumbling Tongue—An evening of six short plays dealing with the complications of communication, by Craig Lucas, Kenneth Lonergan, Neena Beber, Elizabeth Benjamin, Sharr White, and Jamie Gorenberg. Opens April 15 at 8 and continues through May 8. (New York Performance Works, 85 West Broadway, at Chambers St. 840-8400, ext. 54.)

That Championship Season—A revival of Jason Miller's 1972 drama, set during the twenty-year reunion of a high-school basketball team and their coach. In previews. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Annie Get Your Gun—A terrific revival of Irving Berlin's solid-gold score. It's played for romance and sass, which the vulnerable and charming Bernadette Peters and the hunky, easygoing Tom Wopat deliver in spades. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Ashes to Ashes—Harold Pinter's masterly evocation of how torture corrodes the human spirit, directed by Karel Reisz and superbly acted by Lindsay Duncan and David Strathairn. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/22 & 3/1/99.) (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 777-4900.)

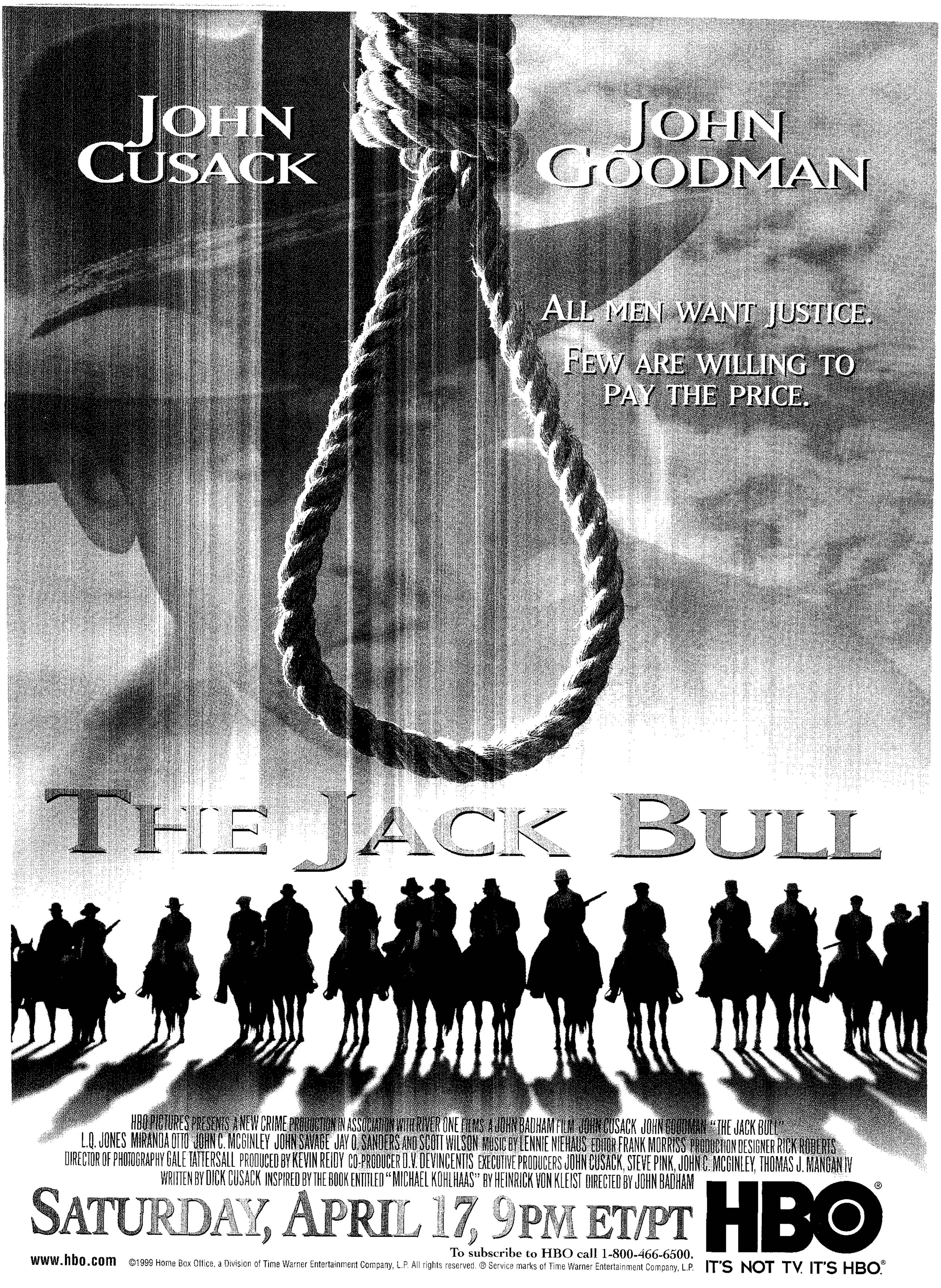
Beautiful Thing—Jonathan Harvey's 1993 drama, set in London, about two working-class boys who fall in love. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

Betty's Summer Vacation—Christopher Durang is a comedian whose fury takes the form of farce: a summer share turns into a catalogue of infamy and outrage—two murders, two rapes, two severed penises, one severed head, and an act of offstage incest—but his characters are beyond shock. They are mutants whose hearts and minds have been warped by the collective tabloid unconscious into bright media clichés. (4/5/99) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes April 18.)

Bitter Lemon—A drama by Jaime Salom, in which a man must decide between love and marriage. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

The Censor—A thriller about a female pornographer, written by Anthony Neilson and staged by the 29th Street Rep. (212 W. 29th St. 465-0575.)

Closer—Patrick Marber's slick dissection of the anatomy of desire follows four characters (Natasha Richardson, Anna Friel, Ciaran Hinds, and Rupert Graves) as they meet, mate, and move on in a kind of algebra of solitude which is factored out before our eyes; it's a shrewdly designed story that brings the characters up against their hearts. Marber can be very funny, and his writing is tight and well paced, but his staging is not. The transitions between scenes are cumbersome, and he sometimes encourages his actors to slow down their delivery of some of his tastiest passages, which undermines rather than highlights the language. (4/5/99) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)



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IT'S NOT TV. IT'S HBO.®

Death of a Salesman—This fiftieth-anniversary production of Arthur Miller's masterpiece has to contend with an ugly revolving set, which robs it of a sense of place, hobbles the pace, and throws the play slightly off-kilter. The casting is generally uneven, but the show still packs a wallop. Brian Dennehy is almost too strong and too solid in himself for the panic-stricken salesman, yet he makes Willy Loman's crazy competitiveness and his misguided love for his son Biff hurt like a punch to the heart. Elizabeth Franz turns in the most fully realized performance, as Willy's beleaguered wife. She is as thin as Dennehy is large, yet she grounds the play and gives it a strong, almost stoic emotional center. (3/8/99) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

"A Simple Heart," adapted by Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar, at C.S.C.

JEAN-VINCENT SÉNAC

Elevator Repair Service—The performance troupe, in their latest collaborative work, "Language Instruction." Thursdays through Sundays at 8, through May 2. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 226-0051.)

The Exact Center of the Universe—A small-town Southern man is torn between his overbearing mother and his sweetheart, in a comedy written by Joan Vail Thorne and starring Frances Sternhagen. (WPP Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Closes April 25.)

Far East—A drama by A. R. Gurney, set during the Korean War. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Footloose—A musical adaptation of the 1984 film. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Fosse—This steamy revue of works by the choreographer Bob Fosse doesn't reveal anything new about the man behind the dances, but it does remind us why we won't be forgetting him anytime soon. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Iceman Cometh—Eugene O'Neill's late drama, starring Kevin Spacey. Howard Davies is the director. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Jodie's Body—In Aviva Jane Carlin's one-woman play (which she wrote and performs) about an artist's model living in London, the initial sight of a large naked woman posing with one arm behind her head and one leg extended straight out, toes up, is distracting only for the first few minutes. After that, you're enchanted by her often hilarious stories, which are both light (art-class fidgeting) and heavy (apartheid-era South Africa). Carlin affectingly moves from fat-girl humor (stupendous thighs, dimply bums) to more abstract ideas related to the flesh (racism, beauty) without allowing her seriousness to jolt or become overbearing. (ArcLight, 152 W. 71st St. 307-4100.)

The Lion in Winter—The late James Goldman, who wrote the clumsy book to "Follies" with Stephen Sondheim and Hal Prince, could also write badly on his own. His 1966 version of the royal quarrels of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II, turned into a bourgeois family squabble, makes a solid high-camp vehicle for Stockard Channing and Laurence Fishburne. Since the stakes and the idiom are not real, neither are the issues. A well-managed waste of time, with a good set by David Gallo and able direction by Michael Mayer, who needs to get down to more serious business. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

Marlene—Siân Phillips portrays Marlene Dietrich, in a musical play by Pam Gems, set in a concert hall in Paris in 1969. Directed by Sean Mathias. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Meanwhile, on the Other Side of Mount Vesuvius—It's 79 A.D., and smoke and ash are in the air, in a comedy from the Adobe Theatre Company. Written by Jay Reis. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 279-4200. Closes April 24.)

The Mineola Twins—Paula Vogel's satire on women's roles—how they have changed and how they have stayed the same over the past forty years—predates her Pulitzer Prize-winning "How I Learned to Drive" and contains a lot less food for thought. Before the curtain goes up, Doris Day songs are played in the theatre and an enormous image of a torpedo bra stares out at the audience—and that's as subtle and fresh as this work gets. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300.)

The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told—Paul Rudnick's new version of a very old tale. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Night Must Fall—Maybe Matthew Broderick is just too darned cute to play a psychopath, but the main problem with this National Actors Theatre production of Emlyn Williams's 1935 thriller is that the play was probably never that thrilling to begin with, and it certainly isn't thrilling in 1999. (Big house, rich old lady in a wheelchair, charming stranger? *Please.*) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Not About Nightingales—A previously unproduced play, the first that Thomas Lanier Williams signed "Tennessee," successfully resuscitated by the Royal National Theatre. The absence of Williams's distinctive cadences and of his usual psychological complexity marks it as the work of a tenderfoot, yet the choreographic panache of Trevor Nunn's production invests the script with a poetic stylishness the prose lacks. (3/8/99) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Paradise Hotel—A look into the nightmarish yet often hilarious workings of the human subconscious is almost always what you get with a Richard Foreman play (no complaints there), and in this case his concerns are particularly libidinal. A group of unfulfilled travellers searching for sexual nirvana end up finding nothing even remotely like it. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes April 18.)

Peter Pan—The former Olympic gymnast Cathy Rigby is back in town to star in a limited engagement of the 1954 musical. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

The Pitchfork Disney—A pair of immature twins pushing thirty mix it up with two eccentric cabaret singers, in a dark comedy by Philip Ridley. Presented by the Blue Light Theatre Company. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 279-4200.)

Red—In Chay Yew's drama, an American writer revisits her native China during the Cultural Revolution. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes April 25.)

A Simple Heart—An adaptation of the Flaubert story, by the choreographer Annie-B Parson and Paul Lazar, who are co-directors. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes April 25.)

Snakebit—Two guys, a gal, and an AIDS test. With all the one-liners and dialogue cued by contemporary culture, this comedy by the actor and first-time playwright David Marshall Grant, like a lot of new plays, seems like a sitcom rewritten for the stage (fewer jokes, more "issues"). It has no real core to it, and throwing in the fear of H.I.V. comes off as a predictable and cheap attempt to give it one. Still, it's almost as painless as back-to-back episodes of "Friends," and the cast is topnotch. Jace Alexander directed. (Century Theatre, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

This Is Our Youth—While Kenneth Lonergan's highly praised comedy about postadolescent heartbreak shows real theatrical promise, it is good on surface behavior but not on subtext—everything that is psychologically important happens offstage. (Douglas Fairbanks, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Tongue of a Bird—A rescue pilot (Cherry Jones) searches the Adirondacks for a missing girl, in a drama by Ellen McLaughlin. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. Closes April 18.)

The Turn of the Screw—Jeffrey Hatcher's adaptation of the Henry James novella. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes April 17.)

The 2.5 Minute Ride—The comic actress Lisa Kron gets it: unless a personal story resonates with humanity, it alienates. Her solo show, a tale of her trip to Auschwitz with her father (who survived the Holocaust but whose parents did not), is offset by extremely funny memories of her family's regular trips to an Ohio amusement park (her father loves roller coasters) and of her brother's wedding to a woman he met on the Internet. In the midst of it all, Kron pulls off the impossible: she makes you feel something like compassion for a Nazi her father interrogated after the war; you still hate him, but he almost seems human. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 239-6200. Closes May 9.)

Via Dolorosa—Because David Hare's lively monologue about his first trip to Israel is about Israelis and Arabs, he sees this work as activism; the advertisements for the show refer to it as a "play." In fact, it is neither. It is a somewhat overproduced ninety-minute after-dinner speech that sheds no new light on the conflict but does bring news of Hare's nostalgia for political mission and a sense of "the strife of the soul"—a phrase he picked up during the journey. Stephen Daldry is the director. (3/29/99) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Weir—A Royal Court Theatre staging of Conor McPherson's latest drama. Ian Rickson is the director. (4/12/99) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Wit—Right up to the last second, this first play by Margaret Edson, about the life and death (from ovarian cancer) of a John Donne scholar (Kathleen Chalfant, in an excruciating, powerful performance), has riches of acting, writing, and stagecraft. (1/18/99) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown—A nothing burger for audiences of all ages. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ART: Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CABARET:** Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **DE LA GUARDA:** Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane

#1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER

JOHN LE CARRÉ

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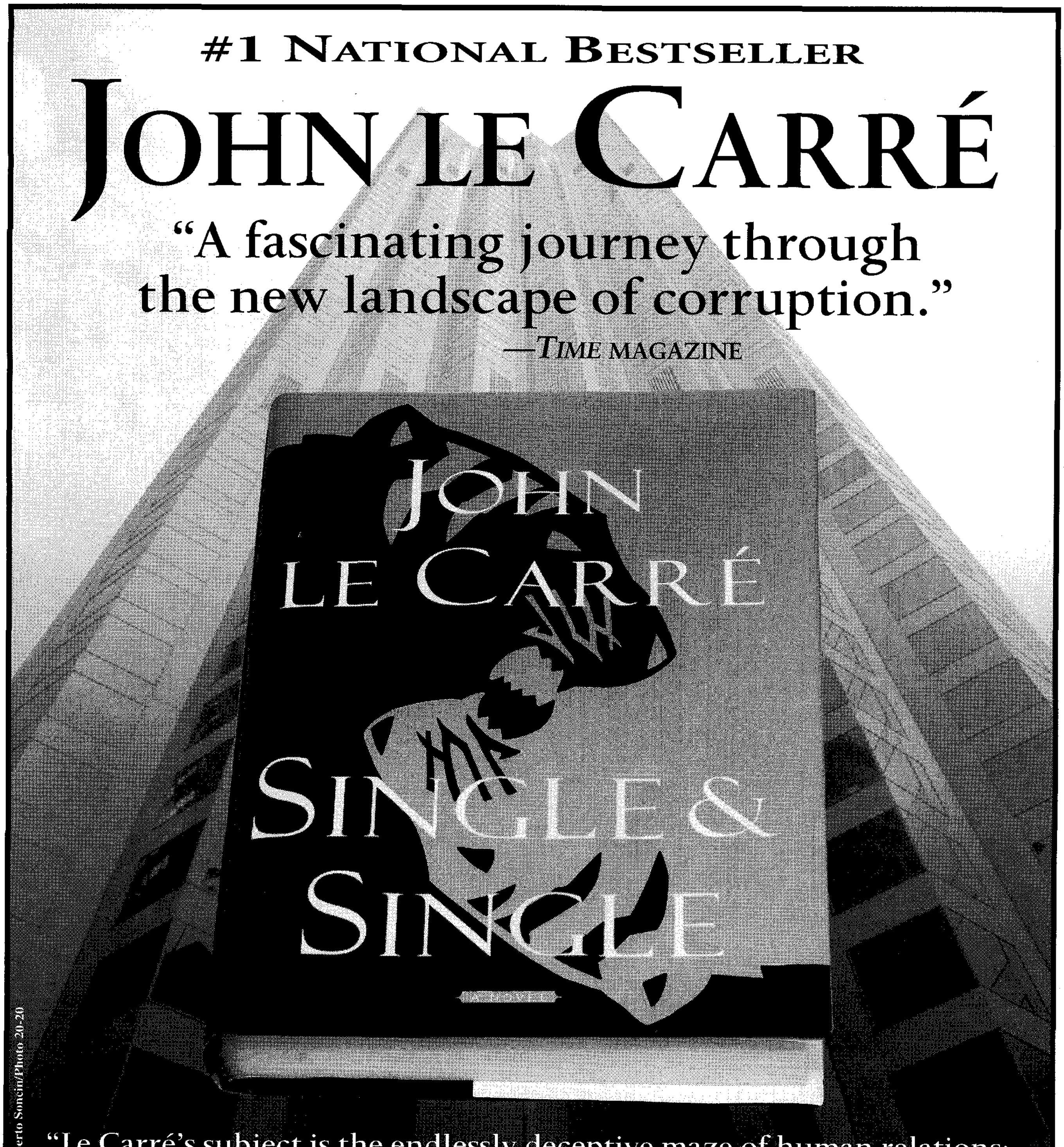

Photo: Roberto Soncin/Photo 20-20

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DANCE

Eliot Feld's Ballet Tech—April 13 and April 17 at 8: "Simon Sez," "Asia," "Re: X," and "Felix: The Ballet." . . . ¶ April 14-15 at 8: "Doo Dah Day," "Cherokee Rose," "Yo Shakespeare," and "Jukebox." . . . ¶ April 16 at 8: "Contra Pose," "A Soldier's Tale," and "Paper Tiger." . . . ¶ April 17-18 at 2: Two programs of family matinées. . . . ¶ April 18 at 7:30: "Jukebox," "Doo Dah Day," and "Paper Tiger." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through May 9.)

"Live Communication"—Savion Glover and fellow-tappers Ayodele Casel, Abron Glover, Jason Samuels, and Omar Edwards perform with an onstage quartet and a host of surprise guests who show up nightly to join in the big jam-session finales. (Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave., at 13th St. 239-6200. April 14-16 at 8 and April 17 at 6 and 10. Through May 22.)

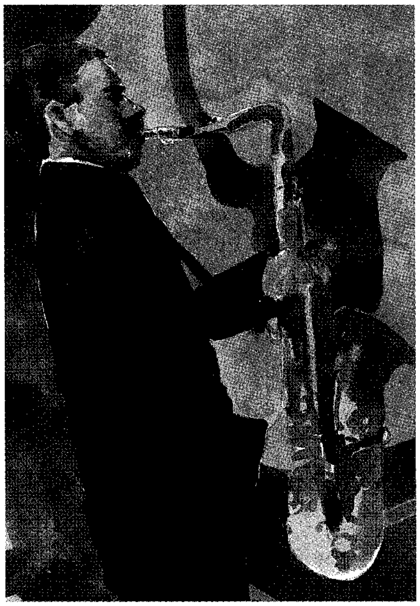
"Of Don Juans and Dying Swans"—The best descriptions of Doug Elkins's inventive dance works often come from the choreographer himself. He calls "In Winter, Stand," the first of three premières on his latest program, "a Celtic knot masquerading as a tango." "Philenor" is an "aikido set done in a swarm of moths," and "Wrench," set to a score of Burt Bacharach tunes, he says, is like being taken through a cocktail party at the age of four, watching your parents slowly getting drunk ("There's a beautiful awkwardness in matters of the heart"). The program is completed by Elkins's wonderful repertory work "Bipolarbear." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. April 15-17 at 8 and April 18 at 3. Through April 25.)

"Homodramaticus"—The choreographer Wil Swanson and Danceworks, his nine-member company, perform four works, including "Sylt," a work he created in his "fast, big" phase, and the title piece, in which a sextet performs unison dance phrases to tenth-century choral works that have a single melodic line. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. April 15-18 at 8:30.)

Ballet Builders—New Choreographers on Pointe presents its annual cavalcade of new works, with eight examples by emerging choreographers. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 307-7171. April 17 at 8 and April 18 at 3.)

"Dancing Across Cultures"—The Bronx festival of dance. April 16 at 8: Afro-flamenco dance by La Santa Luz Dance Company. . . . ¶ April 17 at 8: A hybrid of Japanese traditional movement and modern dance by Michiyo & Dancers. . . . ¶ April 18 at 3: Step dancing by the Pike School of Traditional Irish Dancers. (Lovinger Theatre, Lehman College, 250 Bedford Park Blvd. W., the Bronx. For free tickets, which are required, call 718-960-8833.)

FIGHTING SPIRIT: *There was hardly a more competitive era for tenor saxophonists than the one in which Johnny Griffin came of age. By the time he found his voice, in the early fifties, his peers included Gene Ammons, Hank Mobley, Clifford Jordan, Dexter Gordon, and Jimmy Heath, not to mention Sonny Rollins and John Coltrane. But competition can be stimulating, particularly to those of diminutive stature, and the rampaging "Little Giant," as Griffin was soon dubbed, went out of his way to take on all comers; his blood-or-nothing tenor teamups with the mighty Eddie (Lockjaw) Davis are legendary. He thrived in the late fifties—playing with Art Blakey and replacing Coltrane in Thelonious Monk's quartet—and early sixties, but by 1963 he had moved to Europe, where he's lived ever since. Griffin's annual New York visits (he's at the Village Vanguard through April 18) prove that his tough approach hasn't changed a whit: he still plays with a massive tone, a fearsome rhythm, and an undiminished competitive spirit.*



ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Eminem—On his hilarious début, "The Slim Shady LP," currently at No. 2, the twenty-four-year-old Caucasian from Detroit (real name: Marshall Mathers) makes a surprisingly convincing case (thanks to cred-supplying beats from N.W.A. alum Dr. Dre) for the irrelevance of racial distinctions—at least in the rap world. He also proves another thesis: that rap culture has a hegemonic hold on the youth of America. With Beatnuts and Mix Master Mike. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. April 15 at 8.)

Oumou Sangare—Known as the Madonna of Mali, this thirty-one-year-old singer lets loose in an otherworldly, serpentine voice, which is often backed by gently loping guitars, forlorn violin, and distant percussion. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. April 17 at 8.)

"Great African Ball"—When the Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour, best known for his vocal work on Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes," performs in Dakar, it's often at a marathon dance party called a *soirée dansante*, in which he takes the stage at midnight and plays until the crowd stops moving and shaking, usually at dawn. Here, backed by his fourteen-piece band, he presents a local version of the event, starting and ending a bit earlier, but still packing the same rhythmic punch. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center. April 17 at 10:30.)

John Bunch, Bucky Pizzarelli, and Jay Leonhart—Amiable, dependable, and polished, pianist Bunch, guitarist Pizzarelli, and bassist Leonhart aren't in the business of ruffling feathers. What they do best is provide a broadloom of gently intoxicating swing. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. 752-1428. April 18 at 5.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A cult figure from the heady world of public-access TV, **UNCLE FLOYD** (April 17) hosts a night of weird song parodies and wacky pomo polka. April 20: **COLIN HAY.** Best known as the singer of the long-lost eighties New Wave combo Men at Work, Hay has one of the most memorable pop voices of the past two decades. In the great VH-1 "Behind the Music" tradition, he's grown a bit pasty and paunchy, but when he asks "Who can it be now?" you'll surely remember.

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—April 14: **KULA SHAKER** plays Brit-pop with a Middle Eastern aftertaste. April 17: A few years ago, Mark Linkous, the one-man band known as **SPARKLEHORSE,** suffered a bizarre tragedy that seemed to perfectly encapsulate his desperately twisted, and highly personal, music. After a night of excess, he passed out; more than twelve hours later, he suffered a heart attack upon being revived and wound up partially paralyzed. He spent six months in a wheelchair. Physically, Linkous is now O.K., but on the excellent "Good Morning Spider" his latest songs envision a crippled soul undergoing public therapy. A painful, must-see show. With **VARNALINE.**

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—April 16 and April 19: **PATTY GRIFFIN.** A few years ago, this lanky, red-headed spitfire made bare-bones acoustic folk in the manner of Jewel, only without the platitudes. Last year, with a resounding commercial thud, she released "Flaming Red," a magisterial collection that challenged her incredible voice with electric guitars and head-butting drums; it may have been the most overlooked record of 1998. For this cozy venue, she returns to her solo act, but the troubadour approach is only the small version of a very big performer. When singer **JOHN WESLEY HARDING** (April 20-21) burst onto the scene in the late eighties, he raised quite a few eyebrows—for all the wrong reasons: a stage name taken from an old Dylan album and a style lifted straight from the pen and larynx of Elvis Costello. But the news got better. On "John Wesley Harding's New Deal" (1996), he displayed more inspiration than derivation, and on last year's "Awake" he hit his stride. He's gone back to school with his latest album, "Trad Arr

"Jones," in which he tackles, with considerable skill, traditional folk tunes dating back four centuries. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—April 16-17: In a more perfect world, all putatively great bar bands would live up to their hype as gamely as the **RADIATORS** do. April 20-21: **WILCO.** When the acclaimed country-punk group Uncle Tupelo disbanded, singer Jay Farrar went on to form Son Volt, while his former songwriting partner, Jeff Tweedy, gave the world the more charismatic Wilco. Tweedy's songs are less piercing than Farrar's tortured vignettes, but his band has a rare enthusiasm: with slithering fiddles, cranking guitars, and rootsy charm, they turn every gig into a hoedown. With the riveting, unclassifiable singer-songwriter **VIC CHESNUTT**. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—April 15-17: **MARTIN SEXTON.** This thirty-three-year-old folk rocker from Syracuse spent eight hundred dollars to cut his first album. That was seven years ago; now, after only one subsequent independent release, he's made "The American," his major-label début. Though a bigger budget certainly hasn't harmed Sexton's oaken voice and sharp-edged songwriting, to really experience one of the decade's best storytellers you have to shell out a cover charge; his live shows are what got him this far.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—April 17: The self-described Jewish lesbian folksinger **PHRANC.** April 18: **COLIN HAY** (See the Bottom Line). With singer-songwriter **JOHN SOUTHWORTH.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—April 16: A recent casualty of the bloodbath of a consolidation at Universal, **GIRLS AGAINST BOYS,** one of New York's toughest acts, continues to play high-test industrial pop while posing like Marlboro Men. Somebody give these guys a record deal.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—April 14: The **SMASHING PUMPKINS,** presumably humbled by the lackluster response to their enervating record "Adore," play a rare club gig. It's your best chance to see Billy Corgan's gleaming dome up close. Also on April 14: Rappers **JUVENILE** and **COOL BREEZE.** April 15: The **LATIN PLAYBOYS,** led by Los Lobos singer David Hidalgo and drummer Louie Perez, take a trip way south of the sonic border on their rewarding début album, "Dose," which is laced with unexpected electronic effects. The opening act, **LISA GERMANO,** is an apt match. Though she's forever cursed as John Mellencamp's former violinist, Germano is less a heartland rocker than a Martian chanteuse. On several lovely solo albums (recorded for the trippy 4AD label), she's composed heart-crushing postcards from outer space. April 16: The vaudevillian hardcore of **FISHBONE.** April 19: A rare club performance by **MERLE HAGGARD,** the grizzled, ornery master of drivin', drinkin', and thinkin' songs. With alterna-country up-and-comers **FRED EAGLESMITH** and **MIKE IRELAND.**

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—April 18: Jamaican keyboardist **MONTY ALEXANDER** and guitarist **ERNEST RANGLIN,** who were down in Kingston for the birth of ska back in the sixties, pay tribute with other musicians to the late Skatalite saxophonist Rolando Alphonso, who died last November while performing. April 19: Former Tribe Called Quest rapper **PHIFE** goes solo.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—April 15-17: The **LEE KONITZ** quartet. The seventy-one-year-old altoist Konitz has restored his confident manner and singular tone, and he's taking more risks than ever. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through April 18: The pianist **MICHEL CAMILO** and his trio. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through May 1, **BARBARA COOK.** Her sunny soprano remains a commanding instrument, and she still sets the standard in combining musicality with intensity. In this engagement, Cook salutes the career of Gower Champion. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, the elegant and reassuring pianist **PETER MINTUN** is in attendance.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—**PHAROAH SANDERS** (through April 18) has become the complete saxophonist. It's been quite an evolution for the roaring iconoclast who once made even late-period Coltrane sound reserved; rather than have them running for the doors, Sanders' colossal tone and naked emotiveness on tenor and soprano now embrace an audience openheartedly. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—April 14-18: The **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN** quartet. The tenor saxophonist has been carrying the banner of gritty soul-jazz since he was the pride of Ray Charles's classic band of the fifties. Newman came up the hard way, and you can hear every second of dues-paying in his fervent roughhouse tone. Dining.

Joe's Pub, 425 Lafayette St. (239-6200)—April 19: Comedian and singer **LEA DELARIA,** who recently wowed the few people who turned out to see "On the Town."

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—April 14-17: The fleet Canadian guitarist **PETER LEITCH** has called New York home long enough to hone his already prodigious chops and to establish fruitful working relationships with excellent players like bassist **RAY DRUMMOND.**

Jupiter, Mercury, and Virtue (detail), ca. 1523-24, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, Vienna

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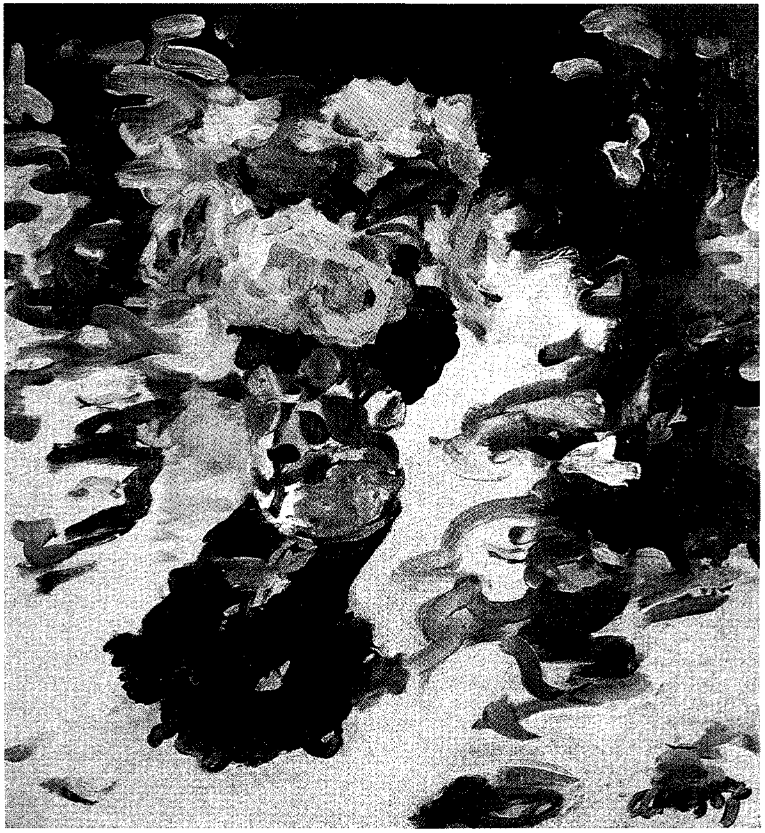


"Rose Bouquet Shadow Play," by Adele Alsop, at Schmidt Bingham.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—April 13-14: Bassist **dave holland's** greatest gift, after his extraordinary fret work, is his engaging writing and arranging. Or maybe it's his knack for assembling first-rate bands. Either way, Holland has kept his mind as open as his fingers are agile, going out of his way to stock his ensembles with young, cutting-edge players—the kind who can keep up with him. April 14: John Zorn may not be on hand, but when four consistently invigorating and provocative players—saxophonist **tim berne,** pianist **uri caine,** bassist **drew gress,** and drummer **kenny wolleson**—meet, they're thisclose to being labelled a downtown supergroup. Since the life span of this unit may be just a single evening, it's worth making an effort to check them out. April 18: The **dave liebman group.** The soprano saxophone can be a demanding mistress, but Liebman has found that the more you give to it, the more you get back. He's a giant on his instrument, one of the few players to successfully assimilate Coltrane's model and then chart a path of his own. Liebman's bands can be less tough-minded than their leader, but he always rises to the occasion.

Tonic, 107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—April 17: Until recently, drummer **susie ibarra** negotiated the rhythmic contusions of David S. Ware's quartet, while the free-spirited violinist **charles burnham** remains a vital element of James Blood Ulmer's Odyssey; joining them will be pianist **cooper-moore.**

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through April 18: The **johnny griffin** quartet. The **vanguard jazz orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

West Bank Café, 407 W. 42nd St., at Ninth Ave. (695-6909)—April 16: The **michael wolff jazzworld workshop** fills Friday nights (through May 7) with a whole lot of shaking, banging, and general percussive merriment. Lending the pianist a hand are Indian tabla player **badal roy,** Latin percussionist **frank colón,** and jazz drummer **clarence penn.**

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—April 14-17: **john bunch, bucky pizzarelli, and jay leonhart.** (See Concerts.) Dining.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—The Basilica of St. Francis, in Assisi, which was severely damaged by earthquakes in September, 1997, has sent its treasury on the road. It's a spectacular trove of Byzantine and early-Renaissance paintings, crucifixes, reliquaries, illuminated manuscripts, and books. Through June 27. . . . ¶ "Our New Clothes: Acquisitions of the 1990s in the Costume Institute." Through Aug. 22. . . . ¶ "The Mirror of the Medieval World" presents two decades' worth of acquisitions by the Cloisters and the Met's department of medieval art. Through July 4. . . . ¶ "Picasso: Painter and Sculptor in Clay." Through June 6. . . . ¶ "Eighteenth-Century French Drawings in New York Collections." Through April 25. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—"Sigmar Polke: Works on Paper, 1963-74." Through June 16. . . . ¶ "Julia Margaret Cameron's Women." Cameron (1815-79) remains the most famous woman photographer of the nineteenth century. Her photography is profoundly Romantic in character, infused with classics that she could casually allude to (Shakespeare, Milton, and Coleridge, among others, provided ideas for her "dress-up" portraits) and marked by the pictorial aesthetics of the Victorian period, especially the dreamy visions of the Pre-Raphaelites. Much disliked by the proponents of modernism in photography during the first half of this century, she is an excellent subject for revival in the age of Cindy Sherman. Cameron's photographs are anti-realistic even when they portray recognizable or famous individuals; her subjects typically appear as if cloaked in the mists of eternity. Phyllis Rose, one of the contributors to the excellent catalogue, comments, "Her parlor maid, Mary Hillier, was so often released from household drudgery to pose as the Virgin that she was known locally as Mary Madonna." A superb exhibition. Through May 4. . . . ¶ "The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect." Through June 1. . . . ¶ "Pop Impressions Europe/USA" presents print works by Americans (Warhol, Lichtenstein, et al.) beside examples from their European counterparts (Richard Hamilton, Gerhard Richter). Through May 18. . . . ¶ "Sight Gags: Grotesque, Caricature, and Wit in Modern and Contemporary Drawing." Through May 4. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"Picasso and the War Years: 1937-45." Through May 9. . . . ¶ "Photography: An Expanded View" includes works by Cindy Sherman, Anna Gaskell, Rineke Dijkstra, Uta Barth, Andreas Gursky, and Tseng Kwong Chi. Through May 16. . . . ¶ "Jim Dine: Walking Memory, 1959-69." Through May 16. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (534-1672)—"The Astor Place Riot: Looking Back 150 Years," an installation of engravings and prints, examines the events of another year in which Shakespeare was hot, that time tragically so. In 1849, the loyal adherents of the melodramatic American actor Edwin Forrest, principally the rough trade and volunteer firefighters who patronized the Bowery theatres, gathered outside the Astor Place Opera House to agitate against the British actor William Macready, whose onstage restraint made him the darling of the uptown "codfish aristocracy." While Macready played Macbeth, the mob (some fifteen thousand strong) hurled stones, and New York City police fired into the crowd, killing twenty-two. The performance continued, but the play soon closed. Through Oct. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Adele Alsop—Interiors and landscapes by a painter who lives in Moab, Utah. With their fondness for dappled light, mountain views, and cut flowers, these images at first seem like hymns to gracious living. What redeems them is simple painterly excitement. Alsop's brush wriggles and leaps across the canvas, trailing ideographs of bright, responsive color. For all their conventional gentility, these pictures blaze with childlike delight. Through April 24. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. 888-1122.)

Joseph Cornell (1903-72)—Two dozen box constructions and collages by the great eccentric Surrealist, who lived all his life in a small frame house on Utopia Parkway, in Queens. This is an ideal show, expertly selected and intimate; per Cornell's specifications, the boxes have been installed on waist-high, child-level platforms, so that you have to stoop to look at them. Among the highlights is "Hotel d'Etoile," perhaps Cornell's most austere construction. Using little more than a dowel, a mirror, and a piece of paint-splattered glass, he built an empty chamber that feels as melancholy as a half-remembered lullaby. Through April 24. (Helman, 20 W. 57th St. 245-2888.)

Julie Heffernan—Exuberant, bizarre surrealist fantasies, marvellously painted, of women, children, and every manner of monster and beast, usually in idyllic settings. "Self-Portrait as a Hairy Woman" turns out to be a painting of apples, some of which contain tiny, strange scenes: a dog with a woman's head, a couple staring in horror at cavorting badgers, a woman waving a man's severed leg at someone wielding a butterfly net in a lovely forest glade. Through April 17. (Littlejohn, 41 E. 57th St. 980-2323. . . . ¶ For another show of Heffernan's works, see the Downtown Short List.)

Diana Horowitz / Matthew Daub—Small, beautifully crafted landscapes, often painted from high vantage points. Horowitz has evidently spent a lot of time looking at Corot's "Bridge at Narni," the sketch in the Louvre that is the plein-air equivalent of the Sistine ceiling. Its influence sparkles throughout her silvery views of Manhattan bridges and New England highways, all of which have a rare delicacy of tone. / Impressively intricate, if uninspired, watercolors of Pennsylvania streets and suburbs. Both shows through April 24. (MB Modern, 41 E. 57th St. 371-3444. Open Mondays.)

Bill Jacklin—Soft-focus, smudgily colored scenes of life in New York City, evoking a slow-motion version of Futurism more than Impressionism. Tranquil views (blooming trees in Central Park, a quiet moment alone in a Greek diner) alternate with the hubbub of Broadway and the Stock Exchange. An aerial view of a crowd scene on the Great Lawn looks as if it were choreographed by Busby Berkeley. Many of the paintings, particularly the architectural studies, are lit by golden, slanting sunlight that conveys sentimentality more than it does the ecstatic atmosphere Jacklin seems to have been seeking. Through April 17. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays.)

Sigmar Polke—To complement the Polke exhibition at MOMA, two galleries have organized concurrent shows of his works on paper. Werner offers a blizzard of doodles on notebook pages dating from the sixties through the eighties. They're so casual that it's hard to imagine even diehard Polke fans showing much interest. Knoedler has more engaging recent works, including a series of striking opalescent paint spills on black paper. Here, Polke's offhandedness pays off. The technique is a kindergarten standby: pour and tilt. In Polke's hands, though, the results are spreading, tentacular forms, unforgettably sinister and beautiful. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays; through May 15. . . . Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 794-0550. Through April 24.)

Charles Seliger / Morris Graves—Incredibly detailed abstractions in acrylic, about a foot square, in a palette ranging from pale pastels to vibrant primary hues. Some of the panels are like tiny color-field paintings, while others resemble mysterious mosaics, perhaps made from pollen or tiny flakes of quartz. The technique is amazing, and it completely triumphs over content. / Exquisite nature studies from the forties and fifties by a modern Zen mystic. Some calligraphic drawings of birds are delightfully naturalistic; a gouache of the waning moon has been transformed into an abstract koan. Both shows through May 1. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. 247-0082.)

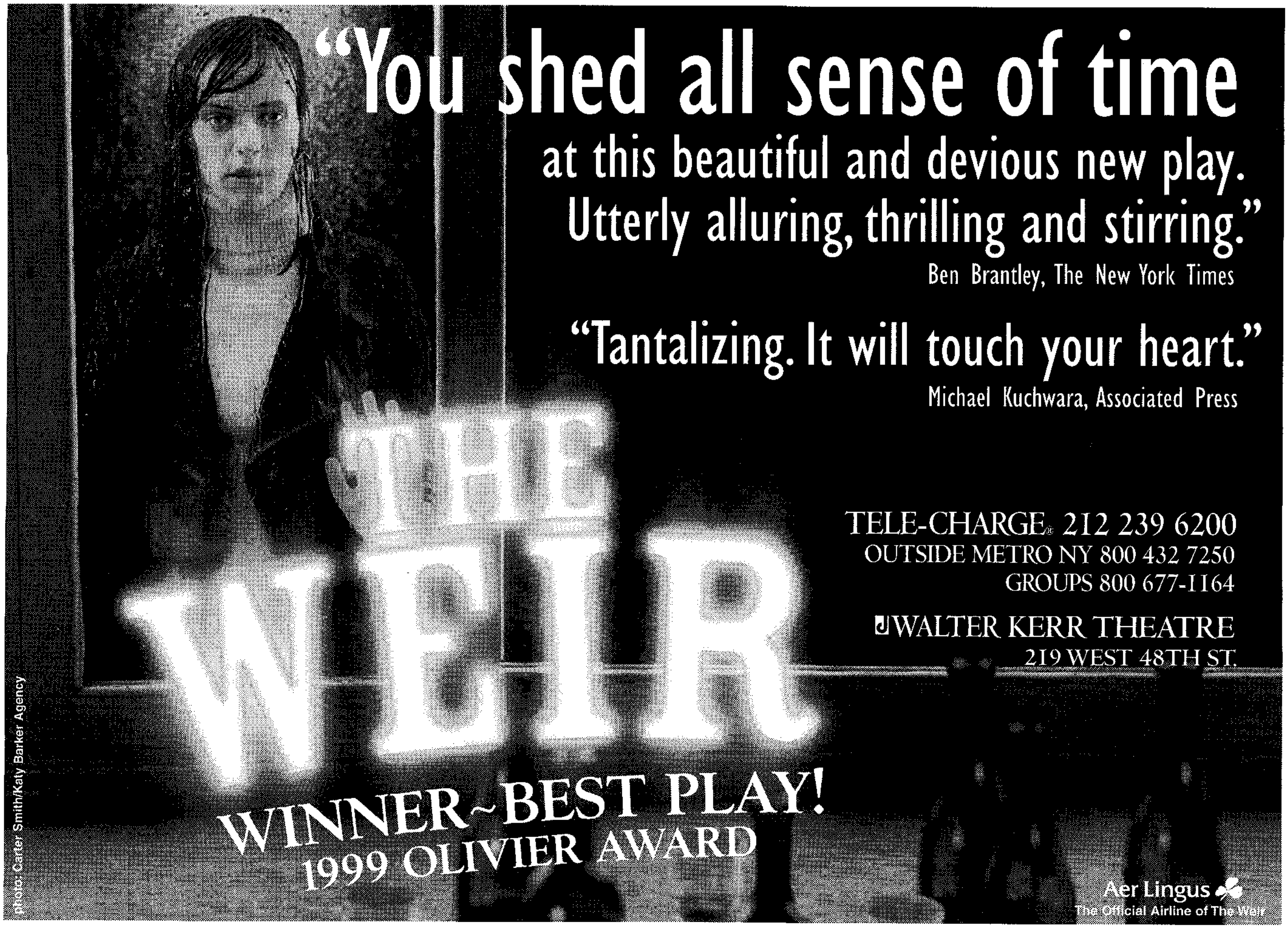
Short List—**marina abramovic and ana mendieta,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. 315-0470. Through April 24. (See also Downtown Short List.) . . . **william bailey,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. 980-5454. Through April 24. . . . **david bierk,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5510. Through April 24. . . . **sue coe,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. 245-6734. Through June 5. . . . **karin davie** and **alexander ross,** Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. Both shows through May 1. (For another show of Davie's work, see the Downtown Short List.) . . . **andrew ehrenworth,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767. Through May 8. . . . **emily eveleth,** Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227. Through April 24. . . . **kara hammond,** Rickards, 1045 Fifth Ave., at 80th St. 924-0858. Through May 8. . . . **john hull,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. 664-0907. Through May 6. . . . **robert mangold,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. Through April 17. . . . **brice marden,** C & M Arts, 45 E. 78th St. 861-0020. Through May 29. . . . **ray parker,** Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. 397-6780. Through May 15. . . . **joseph mallord william turner,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through June 5. . . . **neil welliver,** De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Through April 24. . . . **jane wilson,** DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Through May 1. . . . **daisy youngblood,** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 688-5951. Through May 29.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Mary Beyt—Complex drawings whose depth results from the artist's superimposition of sheets of clear plastic, which separate the layers of images. Beyt has made rubber stamps of old pictures she's gleaned from books—unicorns, flora and fauna, the occasional wide-eyed Medusa. These bits of found imagery are clustered in dense agglomerations and then slathered with Helen Frankenthaler-ish daubs and stains of bright color—sensory overload on a modest scale. Through April 17. (Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 727-2752.)

Ellsworth Kelly—Graphite and ink-on-paper drawings from the early sixties by this premier abstractionist. Though all the works are nonfigurative, in many cases they're strongly evocative of forms in the natural world. Nevertheless, one can never pinpoint a specific source for the imagery; these drawings remain mysterious and elusive. Some are reminiscent of the artist's line drawings of plants, but they never resolve into a coherent representation. Through May 15. (Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200.)

Short List—**paul bloodgood,** AC Project Room, 453 W. 17th St. 645-4970. Through May 15. . . . **nina bovasso,** Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through May 15. . . . **jean cocteau,** Wessel and O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. 242-8811. Through May 9. . . . **oliver herring,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through May 8. . . . **mike kelley,** Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through May 8. . . . **sean landers,** Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000. Through May 22. . . . **robert mc curdy,** Auchincloss, 601 W. 26th St. 727-2845. Through June 26. . . . **chuck nanney,**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Debs, 529 W. 20th St. 647-7080. Through May 1. . . . **BEVERLY PEPPER,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 463-8634. Through May 15. . . . **ELIZABETH PEYTON,** Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258. Through May 1. . . . **DANIEL PFLUMM,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through May 8. . . . **JACK PIERSON,** Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727. Through May 1. . . . **JOE SCANLAN,** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460. Through May 8. . . . **JOVI SCHNELL,** Eller, 529 W. 20th St. 206-6411. Through April 17.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Bonnie Collura—The first part of a trilogy called "Inalienable: Liberty, Life, the Pursuit of Happiness" features a styrene sculpture that combines Jesus, Dorothy from "The Wizard of Oz," and a stag in molt. Related works on paper, drawn in a hasty outline style, show these and other characters morphing and dissolving into each other. Like a number of young artists who show at Basilico, Collura invents freewheeling allegorical narratives that have a promising, if sometimes bewildering, complexity. Through April 24. (Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St. 966-1831.)

Nabil Nahas—Large- and medium-scale paintings in which Nahas often uses cast starfish as the foundation for dense accretions of acrylic paint mixed with pumice. As such, the pictures have an almost sculptural, relieflike quality. These new works are far more varied visually than those in the artist's previous show, but they remain wholly abstract. In the wake of the recent Pollock retrospective and the resurgent interest in color-field painting, Nahas's Action-sculpture style may enjoy renewed relevance. Through April 24. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685.)

James Nares—New oil-on-linen paintings that the artist executes with a single, often sinuous, looping stroke, using brushes that he crafts specifically for the effects he wishes to create in each picture. The process is labor-intensive, even though the final gesture might be accomplished in seconds. Through April 24. (Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219.)

Sandra Scolnik—Seductively creepy little paintings of the artist posing in immaculately styled fifties bedrooms and living rooms. Sometimes Scolnik paints herself as a pair of twin sisters in matching dresses. Often she varies her age, appearing as an infant one moment and a dowager the next. What's constant is the paintings' luminous eggshell finish, and their mood of anxious dollhouse narcissism. Through April 24. (CRG, 93 Grand St. 966-4360.)

Short List—**MARINA ABRAMOVIC AND ANA MENDIETA,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through April 24. . . . **MICHELE BASORA** and **ROBERT BURKE,** Collins, 83 Grand St. 226-1861. Both shows through May 1. . . . **KARIN DAVIE,** Boesky, 51 Greene St. 941-9888. Through May 8. . . . **TIM HAWKINSON,** Ace, 275 Hudson St. 255-5599. Through April 30. . . . **JULIE HEFFERNAN** and **NANCY SPERO,** P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Both shows through April 17. . . . **JULIA JACQUETTE** and **KELLY MC CORMICK,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Both shows through May 8. . . . **ON KAWARA,** Zwirner, 43 Greene St. 966-9074. Through April 17. . . . **SUSAN MAYR,** Bodell, 13 E. 7th St. 477-1820. Through April 25. . . . **BARRY MC GEE,** Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Through April 24. . . . **MEREDITH MONK,** Tz'art, 470 Broome St. 966-9059. Through May 8. . . . **BRUCE PEARSON,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 226-3232. Through May 8. . . . **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through April 17. . . . **STELLA SNEAD,** CFM, 112 Greene St. 966-3864. Through May 9. . . . **KAREN YASINSKY,** Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131. Through May 15.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—April 14: Jewelry. . . . ¶ April 15: Clocks and watches, including a ninety-piece single-owner collection of Rolexes. . . . ¶ April 16: Silver and Russian decorative art. . . . ¶ April 20: Stamps. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.) . . . At **CHRISTIE'S EAST:** April 15: Fine but moderately priced jewelry. . . . ¶ April 19: A single-owner collection of collectible books relating to the history of French roads and bridges. . . . ¶ April 20: Memorabilia relating to entertainment, rock and roll, and film animation. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0430.)

Sotheby's—April 14: English and Continental decorative pieces and tableware in silver and gold. . . . ¶ April 16: Collectible movie posters, with at least one representing each of the hundred "best American films" so dubbed by the American Film Institute. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Spink America—A philatelic auction that includes one of fifteen known specimens of the Hawaiian 1851 two-cent missionary stamp—this being the only one affixed to a complete letter. (55 E. 19th St., fourth floor. 546-1199. April 20.)

New York Antiquarian Book Fair—The thirty-ninth annual gathering of international dealers. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. April 15-18. For information, call 777-5218.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Robert Frank—"From the Canadian Side," a show of vintage prints from the artist's Welsh-miner series of 1953 along with a selection of recent work. Through April 24. (Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999.)

Andrew Moore—Large-scale, wonderfully detailed color interiors and exteriors made in Havana during the past year. In venturing beyond his usual New York City haunts (earlier work has featured 42nd Street theatres before their renovation, the abandoned City Hall subway station, and the decrepit insane asylum on Roosevelt Island), the artist has succeeded in refining, and subtly altering, his approach to subject matter. Whereas he once focussed on the rewarding but sometimes cold glories of architecture, now Moore is entranced by the relationship between the beautiful, resilient Cubans and their half-ruined drawing rooms, kitchens, and courtyards. The mainly vertical compositions—in which space is divided by form and color and often defined by figures, such as a small dog sitting on the marble floor of a high-ceilinged parlor—are, for the most part, exquisite. Through May 15. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

Eliot Porter (1901-90)—Vintage dye-transfer landscapes and nature photographs by the pioneering colorist. Through May 15. (Alan Klotz/Photocollect, 22 E. 72nd St. 327-2211. Closed Tuesdays.)

Peter Sekaer (1901-50)—Gelatin-silver prints of nineteen-thirties street life in New York City and in cities and towns throughout the South. Through May 1. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

Fred Zinnemann (1907-97)—As an Austrian immigrant in the early thirties, twenty years before he would direct "High Noon" and "From Here to Eternity," Zinnemann made these somewhat familiar but well-done and subtly charged images of Wall Street, Grand Central Terminal, Times Square, and the Brooklyn Bridge. Through May 1. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

"Flashback: The Sixties"—A group show of works by, among others, Diane Arbus, David Bailey, Linda McCartney, and Garry Winogrand. Through May 8. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

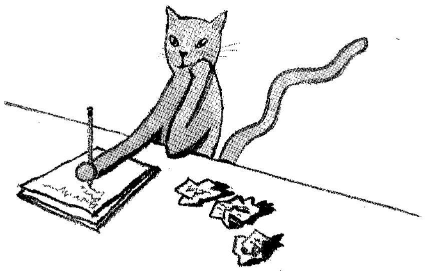
International Center of Photography—"Newman's Gift: 60 Years of Photography," a retrospective of the portraitist Arnold Newman's career. Through June 6. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 8; and Saturdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Short List—**ANSEL ADAMS,** Carter, 560 Broadway. 966-1933. Through May 1. . . . **SUSAN DERGES** and **TESSA TRAEGER,** Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300. Both shows through May 8. . . . **DAN ESTABROOK,** Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767.

BOOK CURRENTS

Unmuzzled

One of the most instructive of Socratic dialogues was not recorded by Plato and didn't involve Socrates; it was a colloquy of two worldly but unjaded house pets—as told by Cervantes. In "The Dialogue of the Dogs," recently released in **Exemplary Stories** (Oxford World's Classics), the gift of speech falls on the Spanish mutts Scipio and Berganza, who hurry to share notes on their misadventures among fickle humans before the miracle passes. To win the heart of the rare good master, they decide, a dog needs to be humble, above all. "Humility is the basis and foundation of all virtues," Berganza declares. "It makes enemies into friends, assuages the anger of the irate, and undermines the arrogance of the proud." Four centuries later, dogs have the lesson down cold.



Unleashed: Poems by Writers' Dogs (Three Rivers) offers eloquent testimony of canine loyalty. In "Lola's Lament," Arthur Miller's dog ponders her duties: "I worry. / I have to because nobody else does. / Some strange car comes up the driveway— / They go right on talking. They trust, / I don't. Threat crosses my nose / Twenty times a day." Another agitated hound was Ron Carlson's dog Max, who once caught a car. Max intones, "I'm now a legend underneath this porch / where old age has me tethered in the yard, / and every young pup carries his own torch / to me, the dog that caught a '60 Ford."

Cats, of course, can be true-blue, too, and none more than the gray tabby Mrs. Chippy, who warmed the ankles of the crew of the ship Endurance, which was stranded on Antarctic ice for twenty-two months in 1915 and 1916. In **Mrs. Chippy's Last Expedition: The Remarkable Journal of Shackleton's Polar-Bound Cat** (HarperPerennial), Caroline Alexander furnishes the gently fanciful diary of Mrs. Chippy's days and nights—spent contemplating "hills and hummocks" of ice that "look like shining peaks of whipped cream," keeping a lookout for seals and penguins, and ridding the storeroom of vermin. Of Lees, the storeroom manager, Mrs. Chippy observes, "[He] knows nothing about mice, and wouldn't know what to do with one if it sat in his bowl."

CHRISTINE CURRY

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

Reynolds Price: Prose & Poetry

REYNOLDS PRICE: THE COLLECTED POEMS

Though best known for his prose, Reynolds Price is also an accomplished poet. Spanning decades of literary achievement, *The Collected Poems* is a milestone not only in his creative life but in contemporary American poetry as well. (Scribner Poetry)

Publisher's Price: $20.00

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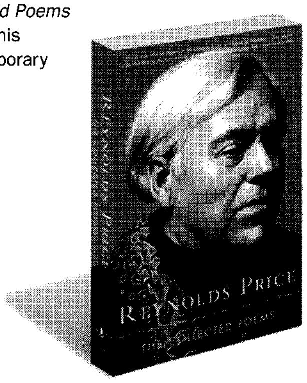
Reynolds Price
Reynolds Price
The Collected Poems

LETTER TO A MAN IN THE FIRE

After reading *A Whole New Life*, Reynolds Price's account of his recovery from cancer, a young man similarly affected wrote to him asking about the nature of God and our need to understand Him. This life-affirming book is the author's response, which, tragically, never reached its intended audience but now touches and enlightens us. (Scribner)

Publisher's Price: $20.00

Discount **30%**

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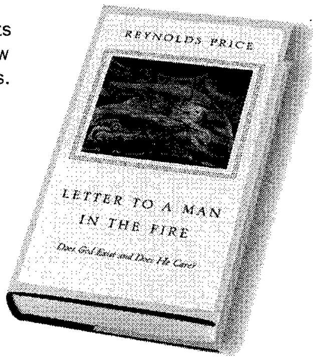
Reynolds Price
Letter to a Man in the Fire
Does God Exist and Does He Care?

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A SINGULAR FAMILY

Three novels and a short story follow the love story of Rosacoke Mustian and Wesley Beavers. Set in Reynolds Price's beloved North Carolina, *A Singular Family* spans the years of a relationship between two Southerners, exploring the themes of family and the past with lyrical precision, humor and humanity. (Scribner Paperback Fiction)

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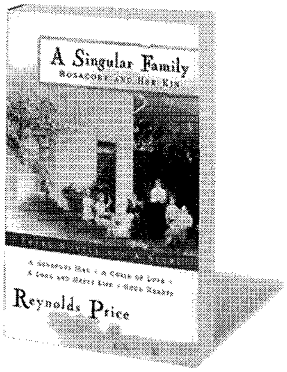
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Through April 24. . . . **ELDON GARNET,** Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through April 24. . . . **LAURENT MILLET,** Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 989-7600. Through May 15. . . . **ROGER NEWTON,** Roth Horowitz, 160a E. 70th St. 717-9067. Through April 17. . . . **MARTIN PARR,** Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through April 24. . . . **CLIFFORD ROSS,** Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through May 1. . . . **TOSHIO SHIBATA,** Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 397-3930. Through May 27. . . . **JOSEF SUDEK,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through April 22.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Alice Tully Hall is 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 501-3330; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 996-1100.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**GIULIO CESARE,** by Handel, with Sylvia McNair, Jennifer Larmore, David Daniels, Stephanie Blythe, and Brian Asawa; conducted by John Nelson. (April 14 at 7:30 and April 17 at 1:30.) . . . **THE QUEEN OF SPADES,** by Tchaikovsky, with Galina Gorchakova, Olga Borodina, Elisabeth Söderström, Plácido Domingo, Nikolai Putilin, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky; Valery Gergiev. (April 15 at 8.) . . . **SUSANNAH,** by Carlisle Floyd, with Renée Fleming, Jerry Hadley, John McVeigh, and Samuel Ramey; James Conlon. (April 16 at 8.) . . . **WOZZECK,** with Hildegard Behrens, Franz Grundheber, Mark Baker, Kenneth Riegel, and Franz Hawlata; James Levine. (April 17 at 8 and April 20 at 7:30.) . . . **AIDA,** with Sharon Sweet, Ms. Borodina, Dennis O'Neill, Gregg Baker, and Paul Plishka; Mr. Levine. (April 19 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. The season continues through April 24.)

New York City Opera—April 14 and April 20 at 7:30 and April 17 at 1:30: "Don Giovanni." . . . ¶ April 15 at 7:30: "Madama Butterfly." . . . ¶ April 16 at 8 and April 18 at 1:30: "Intermezzo," by Strauss, performed in English. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through April 25.)

"Dust"—A multimedia "television opera" (in which live offstage singers are heard but not seen), with music by Robert Ashley and video direction by Yukihiro Yoshihara. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. April 14-16 at 8 and April 17 at 4 and 8.)

Eos Orchestra—It was a clever idea just waiting to be put into action: a program comprising six complete operas averaging only ten minutes in length. No "Götterdämmerung" here, but listeners will get a quick-moving lineup of charming variety: Barber's "A Hand of Bridge," Foss's "Introductions and Good-byes," Hindemith's "Hin und Zurück," Maxwell Davies' "Notre Dame des Fleurs," Jonathan Sheffer's "Camera Obscura," and the première of Mark Adamo's "Avow." Mr. Sheffer conducts these staged performances. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. April 15 at 8. For information about tickets, call 691-6415.)

Dicapo Opera—Presenting "The Crucible," by Robert Ward. (Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. 288-9438. April 16-17 at 8 and April 18 at 3. Through April 25.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "The Magic Flute," in English. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. April 17 at 7:30 and April 18 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Colin Davis leads Mozart's Symphony No. 356 (the "Haffner"), his Piano Concerto in C Major (K. 503, with Imogen Cooper), and his "Posthorn" Serenade. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 15-17 at 8 and April 20 at 7:30.)

Boston Symphony—Bernard Haitink conducts Tippett's "Ritual Dances" from "The Midsummer Marriage," Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 271, with Maria João Pires), and Brahms's Symphony No. 1. (Carnegie Hall. April 14-15 at 8.)

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra and American Opera Projects—Members of the two groups perform Poulenc's "Quatre Chansons pour Enfants" and "L'Histoire de Babar." (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. April 15 at 1 and April 18 at 2. Admission by contribution.)

New York Collegium—The violinist Fabio Biondi leads the period-instrument players in instrumental works and arias by Vivaldi, Tartini, Corelli, Johann Adolphe Hasse, Geminiano Giacomelli, and Michele Mascitti; with mezzo-soprano Laura Polverelli. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. April 16 at 8. . . . ¶ Colden Center, Queens College, Flushing. 718-793-8080. April 18 at 8.)

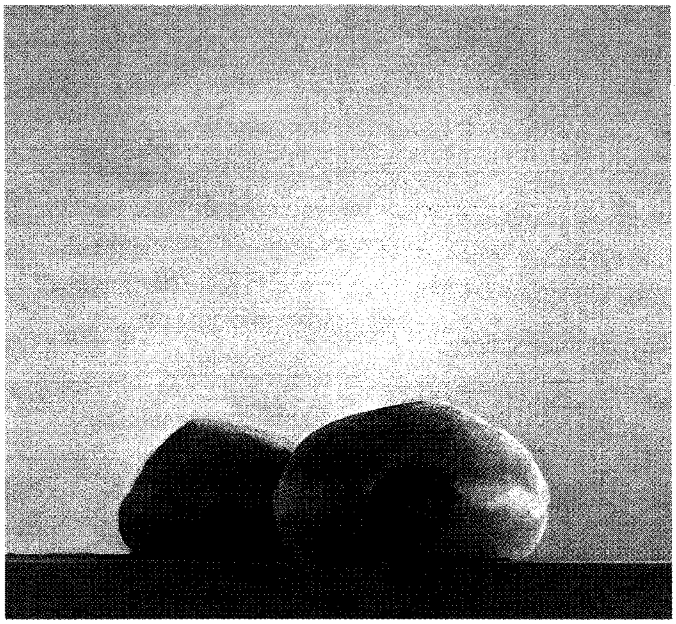
Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp leads Bloch's Concerto Grosso No. 1, concertos by Locatelli (with violinist Mela Tenenbaum) and Johann Friedrich Fasch (featuring David Bilger, the principal trumpeter of the Philadelphia Orchestra), and Bartók's Divertimento. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. April 17 at 7.)

International Sejong Soloists—Sharon Isbin is featured in two Vivaldi guitar concertos and a transcription of a Bach violin concerto; on its own, the chamber orchestra plays works by Handel and C. P. E. Bach. (92nd Street Y. April 17 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducts Penderecki's Sinfonietta for Strings, Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No. 2 (featuring the young Turkish pianist Fazil Say), and Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 1. (Alice Tully Hall. April 17 at 8 and April 18 at 5.)

RECITALS

Bargemusic—April 14 at 6:30: A benefit concert celebrating the eightieth birthday of the redoubtable Olga Bloom, who has kept New York's only floating concert hall buoyant ever since she founded it, twenty-two years ago. Many regular Bargemusic performers will be on hand to make musical offerings, and Ms. Bloom has pledged to take a turn playing Bach on her violin, as she does every morning as preparation for the day ahead. . . . ¶ April 15 at 7:30 and April 18 at 4: An all-Brahms concert, in which violinist Carmit Zori and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott perform his Sonatensatz (Op. posth.); violist Paul Neubauer, cellist Fred Sherry, and Ms. McDermott offer the composer's alternate instrumentation of his Clarinet Trio; and all four join for his A-Major Piano Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)



Emily Eveleth's "Approach," at Danese (see Galleries—Uptown).

Absolute Ensemble—Kristjan Järvi conducts Erkki-Sven Tüür's "Architectonics III," James MacMillan's ". . . as others see us . . .," Lepo Sumera's "Play for 10," and Theo Verbey's "Explusie." (Merkin Concert Hall. April 14 at 8.)

Shlomo Mintz—The violinist, assisted by pianist Itamar Golan, plays sonatas by Mozart and Prokofiev (his First), in addition to short pieces by Dvořák and Tchaikovsky. (92nd Street Y. April 14 at 8.)

Musicians from Marlboro—Performing Britten's "Phantasy" Quartet (for oboe and strings), Hindemith's chamber song cycle "Die Serenaden," and Brahms's G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. April 15 at 8.)

Rodney Gilfry—In his New York début recital, the baritone performs songs by Fauré, Ravel, and Ricky Ian Gordon, among others. Pianist Grant Gershon assists. (Weill Recital Hall. April 16 at 8.)

New Juilliard Ensemble—Joel Sachs conducts Christopher Rouse's "Iscariot," Karl Aage Rasmussen's "Sinking Through a Dream Mirror," Guus Janssen's "Passevite," Conlon Nancarrow's Piece No. 2 for Small Orchestra, and the première of Valentin Bibik's "Music in Memory of A. Schnittke." (Alice Tully Hall. April 16 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Frederic Chiu—Performing Mendelssohn's E-Major Piano Sonata (Op. 6), Liszt's transcriptions of four Schubert songs, and Chopin's Twelve Études (Op. 10). (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. April 17 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

"Guitar Among Others"—This year's series concludes as flutist Suzanne Gilchrist and guitarist Winslow Browning perform a recital of twentieth-century music, by Piazzolla, Virgil Thomson, and others. (Weill Recital Hall. April 17 at 8:30.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting pianist Melvin Chen, the Borromeo String Quartet, and composer Bruce Adolphe (as host) in a program about Beethoven geared toward families with children aged six to twelve. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 18 at 1 and 3.)

Alfred Brendel—The pianist performs Haydn's F-Minor Variations, as well as sonatas by Schubert (in A Major and in B Major) and Mozart (in A Major, K. 331). (Carnegie Hall. April 18 at 2.)

Tribute to Loeffler—Musicians affiliated with Hood College, in Maryland, perform chamber and choral works by Charles Martin Loeffler (1861-1935), a native of Alsace who in 1881 moved to America, where he championed the French aesthetic at the turn of the century. (Alice Tully Hall. April 18 at 2.)

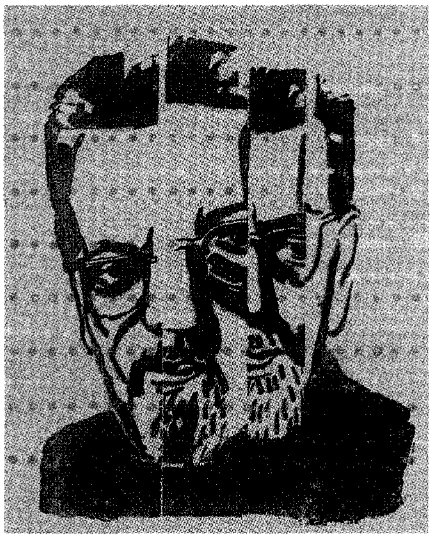
St. Petersburg String Quartet—The Russian foursome plays Tchaikovsky's Quartet No. 1 and, with pianist Ignat Solzhenitsyn, Shostakovich's Piano Quintet. (92nd Street Y. April 18 at 3.)

Horacio Gutiérrez—The pianist performs sonatas by Haydn (in C Major, Hob. XVI:50) and Beethoven (the "Hammerklavier"), in addition to George Perle's "Phantasyplay" and Schumann's

C-Major Fantasy. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. April 18 at 3.)

L'Antica Musica—The early-music group performs Monteverdi's Eighth Book of Madrigals, including a staging of "Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda." (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 378-0248. April 18 at 3.)

Music by Bernard Rands—An assembly of chamber players performs four pieces by the British-American composer, including his new Concertino for Oboe and Chamber Ensemble (featuring Jacqueline LeClair). (Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. April 18-19 at 8. Tickets at the door.)



HEART OF DARKNESS: *The German composer Bernd Alois Zimmermann forced others to grapple with his bleakest thoughts. Nobody who attended New York City Opera's 1991 production of his opera "Die Soldaten" can have forgotten the corpses that dangled above the stage or the ferocious, heartrending sounds that emerged from the pit. Now comes the United States première of his "Requiem for a Young Poet," a vast panorama that wrestles with the violent legacy of the twentieth century. It's a daunting work to produce, but it arrives at Carnegie Hall on April 20, performed by the Southwest Radio Symphony Orchestra of Freiburg, shorn of its violins but augmented by three choirs, a huge percussion section, a jazz combo, electronic tapes, singers, and narrators (reading texts by, among others, three poets who committed suicide). Michael Gielen conducts, as he did when the piece was premièred, in Düsseldorf in 1969. That occasion provided little consolation for Zimmermann: nine months later, he took his own life.*

HADLEY HOOPER

Parnassus—The modern-music group celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary by offering the premières of pieces by Mario Davidovsky, Mark Gustavson, Stephen Hartke, Andrew Imbrie, and Donald Martino. (Merkin Concert Hall. April 19 at 8.)

Dubravka Tomsic—The pianist performs Beethoven's G-Major Sonata (Op. 31, No. 1), Debussy's "Images" (Book Two) and "L'Île Joyeuse," and Brahms's Fantasies (Op. 116) and "Variations on a Theme of Paganini." (Alice Tully Hall. April 19 at 8.)

Judith Ingolfsson—In her New York début recital, the Icelandic violinist performs sonatas by Beethoven (in A Major, Op. 30, No. 1), Ysaÿe, and Prokofiev (his First), in addition to pieces by Lutoslawski, Wieniawski, and Kreisler. She'll be playing the Joseph Gingold Stradivarius, an instrument that will remain in her care for the next four years as a perk for having won the prestigious International Violin Competition of Indianapolis in 1998 (the same year she won the Concert Artists Guild Competition). Pianist Ron Sat assists. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. April 20 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 333-85200.)

Jon Gillock—The organist performs Messiaen's "Diptyque" and "Le Corps Glorieux." (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. April 20 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

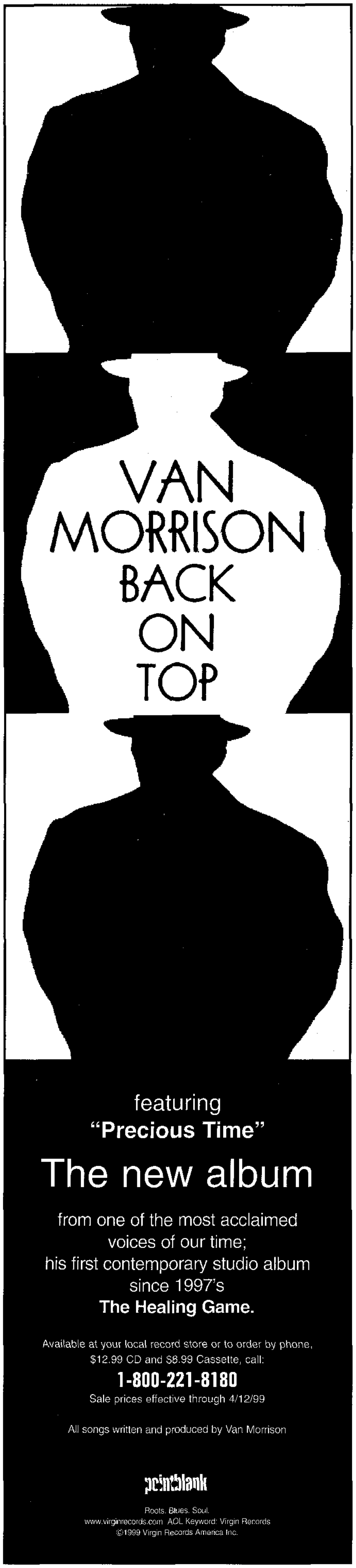
Amy Burton and John Musto—The wife-and-husband soprano-and-pianist duo, assisted by narrator Jacqueline Chambord, performs songs from Central and Eastern Europe at the turn of the century (including works by Schoenberg and Korngold). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. April 20 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"Erotica U.S.A."—On the heels of Mayor Giuliani's efforts to exterminate the sex business in New York City, more than a hundred purveyors of latex garments, explicit magazines, and adult videos, as well as self-help manuals and various stimulating devices, arrive on the West Side of Manhattan, at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. Morning lectures by such sexperts as advice columnist Dan Savage, writer Candida Royalle, and an assortment of doctors and therapists, including Betty Dodson, whose latest book is "Sex for One," complement the display of products designed to keep you up at night. The Mayor, meanwhile, might be kept awake by other concerns—such as how to prevent this sort of thing from happening again. (Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. April 15-18, from 10 to 10. For more information, call 447-4330.)

Readings—April 14 at 1:30: By former Senator George J. Mitchell, from his work about Northern Ireland, "Making Peace." (Posman Books, 1 University Pl. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 14 at 7: By Gary Indiana, from "Three-Month Fever," his account of the life of Andrew Cunanan. (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 15 at 8: Dimitri Nabokov, son of the novelist, joins Martin Amis, Alfred Appel, Brian Boyd, Richard Ford, Joyce Carol Oates, and other writers for an evening of readings from the works of the Russian master. *New Yorker* editor David Remnick is the host. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824.) . . . ¶ April 19 at 7:30: By poets Gerald Stern and Tomaz Salamun, from their work. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—April 14 at 6:15: Michael Lind, the Washington editor of *Harper's* magazine, takes on the electoral process in a lecture entitled "Alice Doesn't Vote Here Anymore." (Fales Library, New York University, 70 Washington Sq. S. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ April 15 at 6:15: J. Pierpont Morgan biographer Jean Strouse discusses the financier and the development of his library. (Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. 685-0008, ext. 347.) . . . ¶ April 17 at 2: Following a screening of his film "Muhammad Ali, the Greatest," the director William Klein talks about the boxer. (American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. 718-784-0077.)



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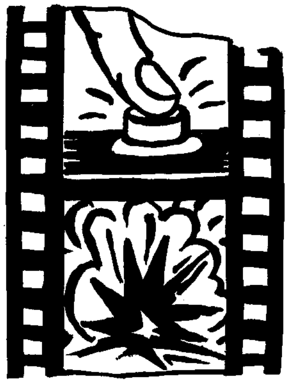
THE MOVIES



OPENING

Friends & Lovers—A romantic comedy that explores the relationships between longtime friends (Alison Eastwood, Stephen Baldwin, Danny Nucci, Neill Barry, and George Newbern) during a Utah ski weekend. Directed by George Hass. Opening April 16. (Union Square.)

Goodbye Lover—A dark comedy about the trials and tribulations of a group of people searching for a better life, with Patricia Arquette, Dermot Mulroney, Ellen DeGeneres, Mary-Louise Parker, and Don Johnson; directed by Roland Joffé. Opening April 16. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, and Village East Cinemas.)

Hideous Kinky—A mother (Kate Winslet) and her two daughters move from London to Morocco to find adventure, in Gillies MacKinnon's film of Esther Freud's 1992 novel. Opening April 16. (Cinema I, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

A Hundred and One Nights—An elderly gentleman (Michel Piccoli) recalls his life in show business. Directed by Agnès Varda. In French. Opening April 16. (Cinema Village.)

Jeanne and the Perfect Guy—Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening April 16.

Life—A comedy about two lifers (Eddie Murphy and Martin Lawrence) who spend sixty years in the Mississippi prison system. Directed by Ted Demme. Opening April 16. (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, State, and Union Square.)

Open Your Eyes—A psychological thriller by Alejandro Amenábar. In Spanish. Opening April 16. (Angelika Film Center.)

Photographer—A documentary, by Dariusz Jablonski, about the Lodz ghetto, using photographs taken by a Nazi accountant named Walter Genewein. In Polish, German, and Yiddish. Opening April 14. (Film Forum.)

SLC Punk!—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening April 16. (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway.)

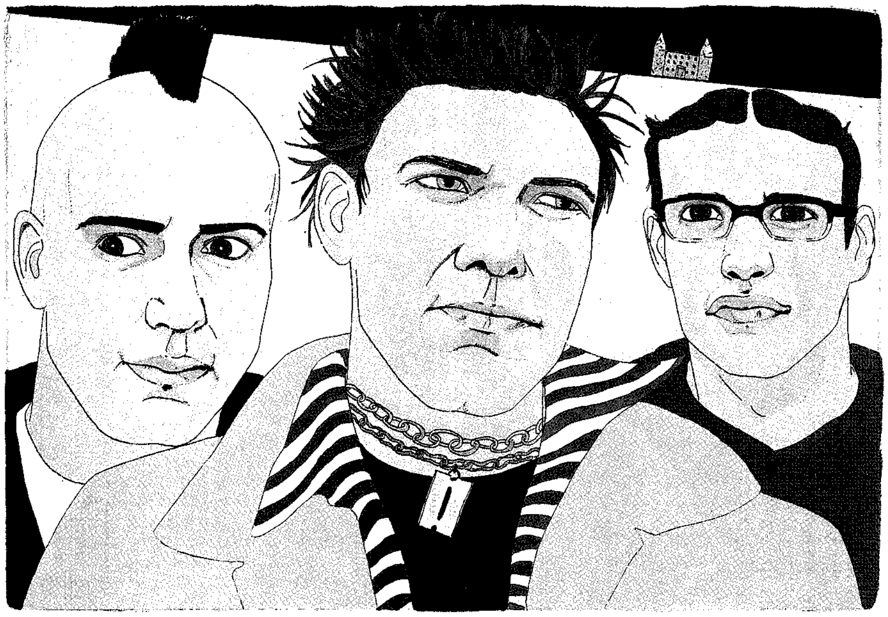
FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Analyze This—You can see the jokes coming well in advance, but you still laugh. Robert De Niro is the mafia boss who is having panic attacks at crucial moments, and Billy Crystal is the mild, bored little shrink who becomes his doctor and friend. What makes the film so effective is that the two men form a real bond—each fulfills some need in the other. Directed by Harold Ramis.—*David Denby* (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, 19th Street East *6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)*

The Card (1952)—Denry the audacious, the opportunist who rises from washerwoman's son to town mayor through devious and ingenious scheming, is one of Alec Guinness's most winning roles—he even gets the girl (Petula Clark, looking very pretty at this stage in her career, though she doesn't sing). His performance is neatly matched against Glynis Johns's portrait of a female opportunist—a babyfaced, husky-voiced dancing teacher who latches on to wealth and a title. Eric Ambler adapted Arnold Bennett's 1911 satire on business methods and class barriers; it makes a blithe, wonderfully satisfying comedy. Directed by Ronald Neame.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; April 18.)

Cookie's Fortune—Robert Altman, in a benevolent mood, has made a lovely ensemble comedy from Anne Rapp's original screenplay about the fate of an inheritance—the house and jewels left behind by one Cookie Orcutt (Patricia Neal), a fine old lady in a small Mississippi town who misses her dead husband so much that she refuses to spend any more time away from him. Cookie's mad nieces (Glenn Close and Julianne Moore) rearrange the evidence of Cookie's suicide so that it looks like a murder, allowing suspicion to fall on the hard-drinking but amiable black man (Charles S. Dutton) who lives in Cookie's house. But the movie is not the usual protest against racism; on the contrary, the town works like the kind of happy, quarrelsome extended family in which people have put up with one another's foibles for years. As these characters bounce off one another, Altman's habitual malice doesn't disappear, exactly, but it mellows into mischief. With Liv Tyler as a misbehaving but bighearted girl, Chris O'Donnell as the inept young policeman who loves her, and many other skillful performers in minor roles.—*D.D.* (4/12/99) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, Chelsea West, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



Michael Goorjian, Matthew Lillard, and Jason Segel in "SLC Punk!"

LARA TOMLIN

La Dolce Vita (1959)—Federico Fellini's moralistic extravaganza about "the sweet life" in Rome. In the course of the nearly three-hour movie, a society journalist named Marcello (Marcello Mastroianni) abandons literary ambition and becomes a publicist. He's not a strong enough antihero to clarify Fellini's most prophetic and compelling theme—the blurring of public and private life. Still, there are some astonishing things here: the statue of Christ being flown above Rome by a helicopter while bikinied beau*ties wave to Jesus, bits of a satiric yet* dreamy episode involving Anita Ekberg as a Swedish-American sex goddess, and the whole sequence of Marcello taking his father to an archaic night club; apparently, glitz must fade before Fellini can find poetry in it. In Italian.—*Michael Sragow* (Symphony Space; April 20.)

The Dreamlife of Angels—Erick Zonca's first feature is set in Lille, in northern France; it is tempting to read the whole movie as a rebuke to sunlit romances on the Côte d'Azur. The heroines are Isa (Elodie Bouchez), a free spirit who moseys around France with a rucksack, and Marie (Natasha Régnier), whom she meets in a clothing factory, and who offers her a place to stay. In a sense, the film is little more than the brief history of their friendship; what fires it up, and takes it to the brink of greatness, is not only that Zonca registers every tremor of their competing emotions—the smiling blitheness of Isa, the inward fury of the beautiful Marie—but that the story travels so far. The film begins with a scuffed, documentary air that gradually deepens, almost without your noticing, into more serene moments of epiphany; the transition is beautifully handled by Bouchez and Régnier, who—quite rightly—shared the prize for Best Actress at the Cannes Film Festival last year. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (4/5/99) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

EDtv—At a slipping cable channel, two rancidly intelligent executives (Rob Reiner and Ellen DeGeneres) hold a contest, choose an appealing but ordinary guy—one Ed Pekurny (Matthew McConaughey), a video-store clerk in San Francisco—and put him on the air, live, twenty-four hours a day. The whole world watches and gets involved in Ed's life, which quickly resembles a soap opera. On the surface, Ron Howard's rambunctious comedy is a satire of media ruthlessness and the public's hunger for instant fame. But it's so broadly conceived that it never achieves any distance from its subject.—*D.D.* (3/29/99) (Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

Fantastic Voyage (1966)—The sci-fi idea is ingenious, promising both poetry and excitement: a medical team is miniaturized so it can go into the bloodstream of a scientist to destroy a blood clot on his brain; the team has only sixty minutes for the journey and operation and getting out. But there's the usual little argument about whether to take *the heroine, Raquel Welch, along* ("A woman has no place on a mission like this"), and we know who the villainous saboteur is as soon as we hear one of the scientists spouting atheism. Stephen Boyd is the stout-hearted hero; with Edmond O'Brien, Donald Pleasence, Arthur Kennedy, William Redfield, Arthur O'Connell, and a lot of bubbly special effects. It isn't terrible, just disappointing. Directed by Richard Fleischer.—*P.K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; April 17-18.)

Following—Director Christopher Nolan has given his first film a clever plot: an oddball writer sneakily follows strangers around town in hopes of inspiring his fiction. When he follows the wrong man (a thief), he's dragged into a scene far more complicated and sinister than he bargained for. The film has echoes of Hitchcock classics such as "Strangers on a Train," but Nolan's story is leaner and meaner than those thrillers. The black-and-white handheld camerawork allows the audience a voyeuristic kick, as if they were part of the crew following the director around. The movie works not only as an exercise in cheap, on-the-street filmmaking; its tense, well-plotted script gives it a real punch.—*Bruce Diones* (Film Forum.)

Forces of Nature—Sandra Bullock plays a flaky sexpot flying to Savannah to visit the son she has neglected for years. Uptight Ben Affleck is travelling on the same plane, to his wedding (to Maura Tierney). Bullock is refreshingly natural, but Affleck seems uncomfortable as a romantic lead—if she's light as a feather, he's stiff as a board. Marc Lawrence's implausible script and Bronwen Hughes's tin-ear direction do nothing to improve matters.—*Sarah Kerr* (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, State, and Union Square.)

Go—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Heat (1972)—A slack, depressive Paul Morrissey version of "Sunset Boulevard," with Joe Dallesandro as a stud hustler and Sylvia Miles as a predatory star in a big mansion. It's meant to be a funny exploitation movie, but the comic moments are rare. Produced by Andy Warhol.—*P.K.* (Anthology Film Archives; April 17-18.)

Jeanne and the Perfect Guy—The French actress Virginie Ledoyen has made a name for herself playing tough, sexually liberated young women. In this musical, she's a promiscuous receptionist who falls in love for the first time with Olivier, the titular "perfect guy" (Mathieu Demy); everything should go these lovers' way, but AIDS arrives to cross their stars. The film is an intriguing homage to the great French musical of doomed youthful love, "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" (Demy is in fact the son of Jacques Demy, who directed "Umbrellas"), but its pious realism is at odds with the element of fantasy that a musical needs in order to fly. Jacques Martineau wrote the script, and he and Olivier Ducastel directed with an eye for crisp, voluptuous color, though they have yet to learn how to move actors around during a song. In French.—*S.K.* (Quad Cinema; starting April 16.)

Life Is Beautiful—Would that it were. The great, donkey-faced Italian clown Roberto Benigni attempts an ambitious fable of comedy's redemptive power. He plays an Italian Jew who keeps alive his little boy's innocence in a Nazi concentration camp by pretending that the routines of the camp are no more than an intricate game staged for his son's benefit. But Benigni's ironic counter-reality undermines this movie, not the Nazis, who were beyond ridicule for the same reason that they were beyond rationality. Totalitarianism makes the fantastic literal—that is its demonic appeal. Benigni's jokes and games just aren't enough, and you leave the movie thinking that what's touching is not Benigni's ministrations to the little boy but his own need to believe in comedy as salvation. With Giorgio Cantarini as the son, who has the heartbreaking quality of the children in the old neorealist movies. In Italian.—*D.D.* (11/16/98 and 3/15/99) (Angelika Film Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and 72nd Street East.)

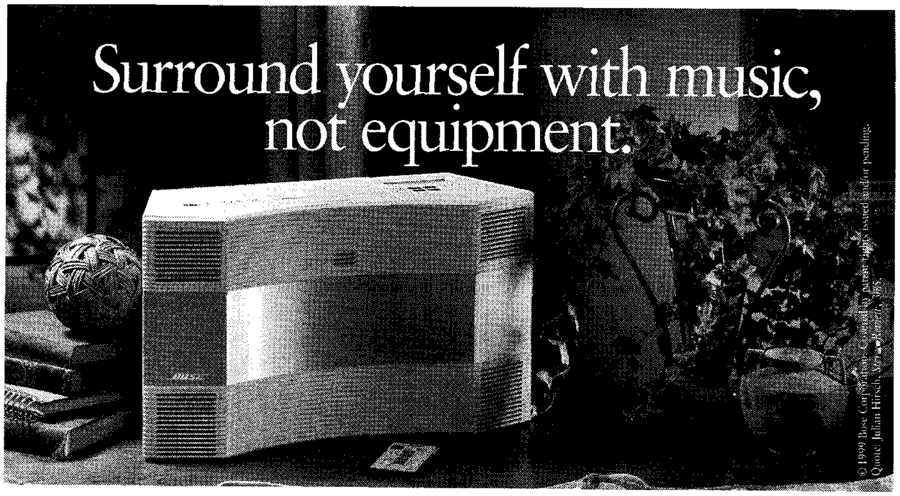
Metroland—In this adaptation of Julian Barnes's novel, Christian Bale and Emily Watson deliver sensible, low-key performances as a children-of-the-sixties couple who experience the compromise of a seventies, middle-class English existence. The director, Philip Saville, imbues the early scenes with a strong, questioning tone, and much of the dialogue has the ring of genuine emotion, but there's little drama to the everyday temptations presented. The film bogs down with preachy sentiment, and its ending is far too sedate to leave the audience with much to think about.—*B.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Eastside Playhouse.)

Never Been Kissed—As a young reporter who goes undercover to do a story on today's teen-agers, Drew Barrymore is cherubic, banging into doors, tripping on stairs, and looking adorably embarrassed by her clumsiness. The film, which Barrymore produced, is meant to be a charming coming-of-age story, but it plays a little too sweetly for its own good. There's hardly a moment of punky humor in it, and the cast, including the reliably gonzo David Arquette, is forced to act coyly throughout.—*B.D.* (Criterion Center, East 85th Street, 64th and 2nd, and Union Square.)

The Pleasure Garden (1925)—The first film that Alfred Hitchcock (previously a movie designer and writer) directed. It's about two chorus girls from the Pleasure Garden Theatre; the parts are played by two American actresses—Virginia Valli is the virtuous one, Carmelita Geraghty the villainous one. The picture has ingenious sequences, and it's good to look at, though the story is vintage melodramatic hokum; actually, some of that hokum is hilariously campy now, such as the sequence about a depraved white man in the tropics. Silent.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; April 16 and April 19.)

Shakespeare in Love—A ripely emotional comedy-fantasia—concocted by director John Madden and screenwriters Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard—of how Shakespeare came to write "Romeo and Juliet." In 1593, young Will (Joseph Fiennes), a stud with liquid eyes and full lips, is just an unhappy and unproductive hack, jealous of the greater Christopher Marlowe (Rupert Everett). At first the movie comes at us too broadly, with many facetiously anachronistic jokes about the grubby professional routines of the theatre. But Will falls in love with the fictional heiress Viola de Lesseps (Gwyneth Paltrow), and when these two poeticizing lovers climb into bed, and Shakespeare's quill begins to fly, the cleverness catches fire and "Shakespeare in Love" turns into an exciting literary-erotic entertainment. With Geoffrey Rush as the theatre manager Henslowe and Judi Dench as a supremely intelligent and wittily dominating Queen Elizabeth.—*D.D.* (12/21/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Ziegfeld. . . . ¶ Cinema I; through April 15.)

10 Things I Hate About You—Bianca (Larisa Oleynik) is an appealing Padua High sophomore, but her worrywart father (Larry Miller) won't let her date until her very smart and very difficult older sister, Kat (Julia Stiles), softens up and agrees to go out with somebody. As long as the writers Karen McCullah Lutz and Kirsten Smith keep the "Taming of the Shrew" parallels going, "10 Things" bobs along brightly. The film was shot in Tacoma, Washington, which is here transformed into a sunny Tuscan paradise, where the teachers—comically played by Allison Janney and Daryl (Chill) Mitchell—are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Quote: Julian Hirsch, Stereo Review, 1987.

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as witty and worldly as the students. First-time feature director Gil Junger gets a lot of laughs in the long setup, but the story eventually reverts to an almost typical high-school romance. Not quite "Clueless."—*Ken Marks* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Union Square.)

A Walk on the Moon—In a clannish Catskills bungalow colony, in the summer of 1969—Woodstock summer—Pearl (Diane Lane), a bored young housewife and mother, becomes convinced that she's lost a decade to mah-jongg and Waldbaum's and begins an affair with a handsome Gentile stranger (Viggo Mortensen) who's passing through. Her hardworking husband (Liev Schreiber), who was never told that sensuality should be part of a man's equipment, is appalled and fights back. In form, the movie is perhaps no more than a conventional triangle drama, but the milieu lends the material a special charm and interest. The actor Tony Goldwyn, directing his first movie, and working from a fine screenplay by Pamela Gray, beautifully captures a moment in which the straitened moral world of the lower-middle-class Jewish characters is beginning to open up—with necessarily painful results. Anna Paquin is Diane Lane's teen-age daughter, and Tovah Feldshuh is her astoundingly prescient mother-in-law. The voice on the camp loudspeaker announcing an endless number of health hazards and shopping opportunities belongs to Julie Kavner.—*D.D.* (4/12/99) (Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.)

At the Walter Reade Theatre, "Gallivant," showing April 27 and April 29 as part of the series "New British Cinema."

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

ALSO PLAYING

AFFLICTION (reviewed in our issue of 1/11/99): BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **BLOOD GUTS BULLETS & OCTANE:** 34th Street Showplace and Waverly. . . . **CENTRAL STATION** (11/30/98): BAM Rose Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema. . . . **DANCEMAKER:** BAM Rose Cinemas and The Screening Room. . . . **8½:** Paris. . . . **ELIZABETH** (11/16/98): BAM Rose Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Union Square. . . . **GODS AND MONSTERS** (11/9/98): 59th Street East Cinema, Quad Cinema, and 34th Street Showplace. . . . **THE HARMONISTS:** Cinema 3rd Avenue and Village East Cinemas. . . . **LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS** (3/8/99): First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **LOVERS OF THE ARCTIC CIRCLE:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **THE MATRIX:** Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Union Square. . . . **THE OUT-OF-TOWNERS:** First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **TRUE CRIME** (3/29/99): Coronet Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VI. . . . **TWIN DRAGONS:** Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Through April 22: "Dial M for Murder" (1954, Alfred Hitchcock; in 3-D).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—April 15 at 6: One program in a series about the history of 8-mm. film and video in the United States. . . . ¶ April 15 at 6:30 and April 16 at 3: "Treyf" (1998, Alisa Lebow and Cynthia Madansky). . . . ¶ A series of films directed or written by Alfred Hitchcock. April 16 at 2:30 and April 19 at 6: "The Blackguard" (1925, Graham Cutts; silent). . . . April 16 at 6 and April 19 at 2:30: "The Pleasure Garden" (†). . . . April 16 at 8 and April 18 at 1: "The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog" (1926; silent). . . . April 17 at 1 and April 20 at 6: "Downhill" (1927; silent). . . . April 17 at 3: "Easy Virtue" (1927; silent). . . . April 17 at 5: "The Ring" (1927; silent). . . . April 18 at 3 and April 20 at 2:30: "The Farmer's Wife" (1928; silent). . . . April 18 at 5: "Champagne" (1928; silent). . . . ¶ April 16 at 6: "Lucrèce Borgia" (1935, Abel Gance; in French). . . . ¶ April 16 at 8: "Klute" (1971, Alan J. Pakula). . . . ¶ April 17 at 2:30: "Orpheus" (1949, Jean Cocteau; in French). . . . ¶ April 17 at 5: "The Eagle Has Two Heads" (1948, Cocteau; in French). . . . ¶ April 18 at 2:30: "The Card" (†). . . . ¶ April 18 at 5: "A Night to Remember" (1958, Roy Baker).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films from Norway; in Norwegian, with English subtitles. April 14 at 2 and 6:15 and April 15 at 4: "Burnt by Frost" (1997, Knut Erik Jensen). . . . April 14 at 4 and 8:15 and April 15 at 2: "Mendel" (1997, Alexander Rosler). . . . ¶ A program entitled "New British Cinema." April 16 at 2 and 6:15, April 17 at 9:50, and April 18 at 6:30: "The Tichborne Claiment" (David Yates). . . . April 16 at 4 and 8:45 and April 20 at 2: "Face" (Antonia Bird). . . . April 17 at 4 and April 18 at 6:45: Six short films. . . . April 17 at 7:30, April 18 at 4, and April 19 at 2: "The Girl with Brains in Her Feet" (Roberto Bangura). . . . April 19 at 4 and April 20 at 6:30: "Small Time" (Shane Meadows). . . . April 20 at 4:15 and 8:15: "Guru in Seven" (Shani Grewal). . . . ¶ April 17-18 at 2: "Fantastic Voyage" (†).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—April 17-18 at 2 and 5: "Muhammad Ali, the Greatest" (1974, William Klein).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—April 20 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "King of Hearts" (1966, Philippe de Broca; in French).

Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A program of films featuring Marcello Mastroianni. April 20 at 7: "La Dolce Vita" (†).

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On April 18 at 7, the feature will be "Smashing Time" (1967, Desmond Davis).

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—A retrospective of films by Tai Kato; in Japanese, with English subtitles. April 16 at 6:30: "Fighting Tatsu, the Rickshaw Man" (1964).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—A program of Paul Morrissey films. April 15 at 6, 8, and 10 and April 18 at 4: "Flesh" (1968). . . . April 16 at 7 and 9 and April 18 at 6:30: "Trash" (1970). . . . April 17 at 4, 6, and 8 and April 18 at 8: "Heat" (†).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A program of Alfred Hitchcock's television work. April 15-16 at 6 and April 17-18 at 2: Three shows featuring Vera Miles—"The House Where Time Stopped" (1955), "Revenge" (1955), and "Incident at a Corner" (1960).

The 1999 Polo Ralph Lauren New Works Festival of Columbia University Filmmakers—More than fifty films and videos by students in Columbia University's Graduate Film Division will be shown between April 19 and April 24, at DGA Theatre (110 W. 57th St.) and Columbia University's Dodge Hall (Broadway at 116th St.). (For schedule information, call 854-1547.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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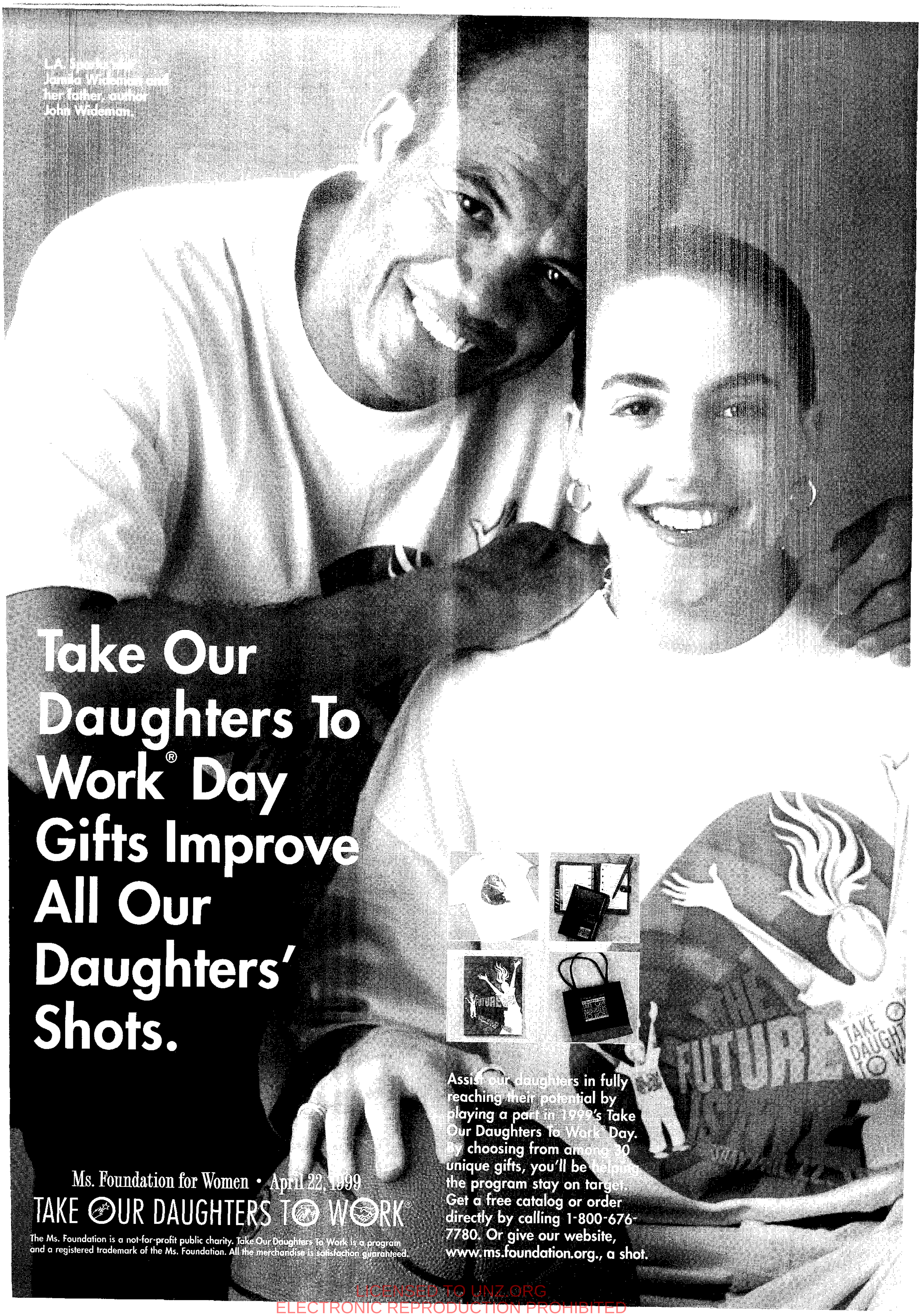
(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.



L.A. Sparks star Jamila Wideman and her father, author John Wideman.

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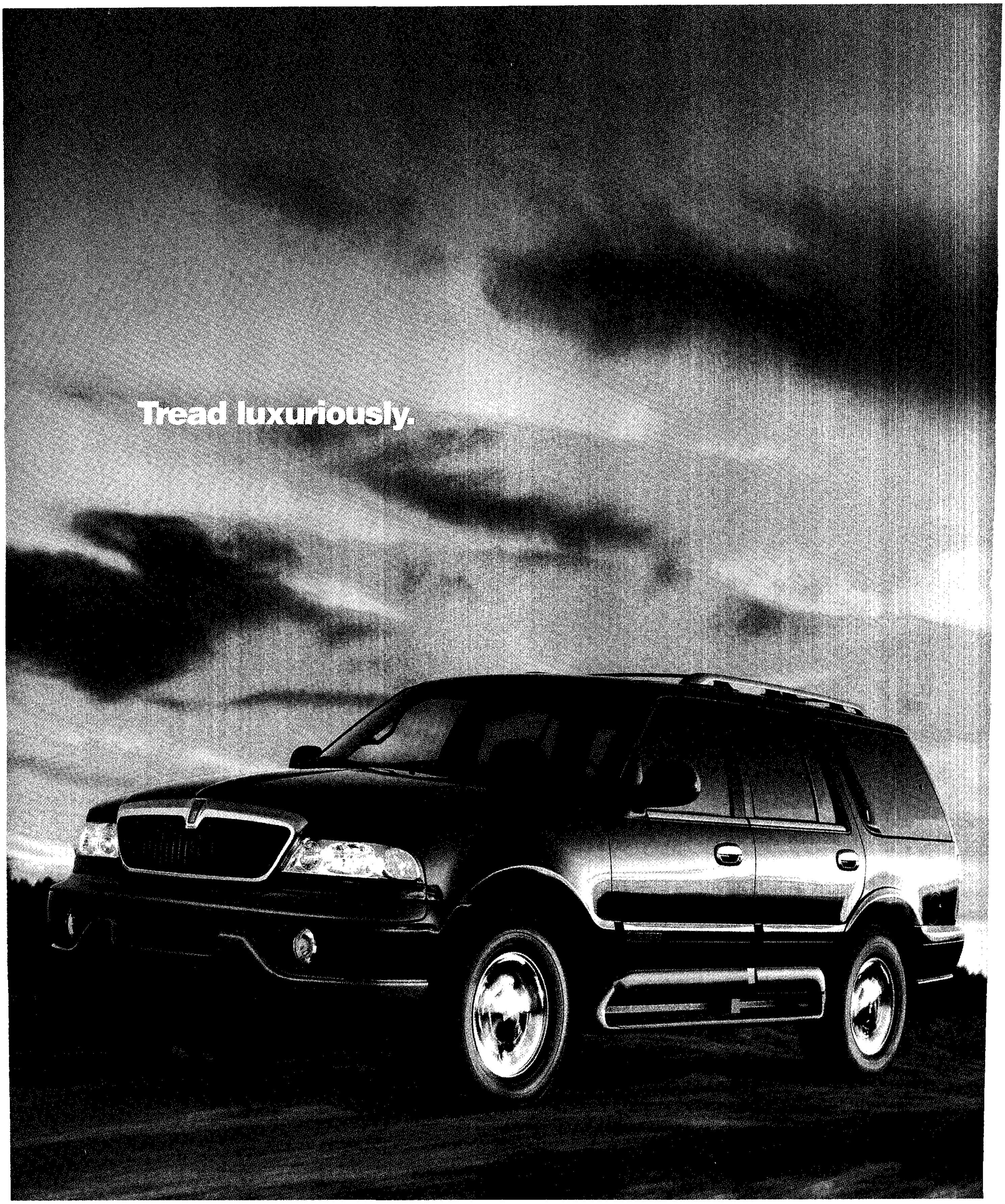

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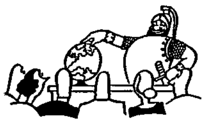
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

Wars and the man.

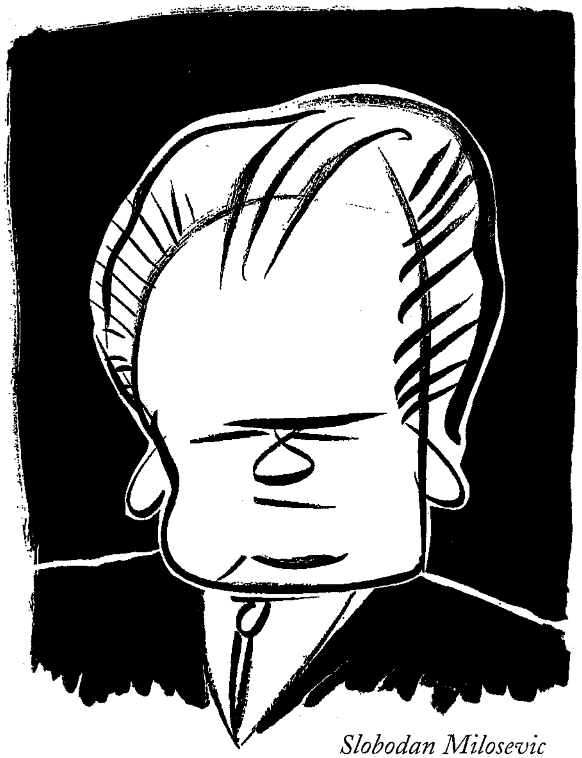


WITH the agony of Kosovo unfolding, scene by gruesome scene, and Slobodan Milosevic gliding suavely through his pirouettes in Belgrade with envoys from Russia and the Vatican, it has become easier than ever to see the whole five-act tragedy of Yugoslavia's breakup as the production of one mad tyrant. It was, after all, in Kosovo that Milosevic found his demagogic voice. Speaking to restive members of the Serb minority there in 1987, he declared, on camera and yet, it seemed, spontaneously, "No one should dare to beat you!" The speech catapulted him from apparatchik obscurity to political prominence as a Serb nationalist. And Kosovo, once he had gained power, became the first focus of his efforts to extend Serb domination over the other citizens of Yugoslavia. The province was stripped of its autonomy in 1989, and ethnic Albanians, though they made up ninety per cent of the population, were stripped of their rights. An extraordinary campaign of administrative dispossession closed schools and colleges and replaced tens of thousands of Albanian workers with Serbs. Kosovo became the scene of the worst human-rights abuses in Europe. While Milosevic, in pursuit of his Greater Serbia, went on to fight bloody wars in Croatia and Bosnia, Kosovo remained the proverbial powder keg of the Balkans.

The passage of Yugoslavia from Tito-style Communism into the post-Communist world has, to be sure, given rise to plenty of other ethnic-nationalist politicians, some of them far more fanatical than Milosevic. Both Franjo Tudjman, the President of Croatia, and Dr. Radovan Karadzic, the former leader of the Bosnian Serbs, bear the responsibility for extensive ethnic violence (though only Karadzic has been indicted for war crimes). All the wars in the former Yugoslavia have been driven not by ethnic enmity, primarily, but by unscrupulous leaders. Even the Serbs, as the historian Noel Malcolm writes, have had their "hopes of genuine democratic development . . . poisoned by the constant reintroduction from above of a politics of fantasy and hatred." And the prime mover and beneficiary of these politics—and of these wars—has been, of course, Milosevic.

Unlike Tudjman and Karadzic, Milosevic is no romantic, and so he has been able to relinquish the dream of a Greater Serbia—and to cut loose hundreds of thousands of war-displaced Serbs—when necessary. He has also kept as much distance as possible between himself and the many killers in his employ. In Richard Holbrooke's memoir of his work as a negotiator in Yugoslavia, there is a scene in which a member of his staff gives Milosevic a report documenting the ties between his forces and the most brutal paramilitaries in Bosnia. Milosevic refuses to touch the document, let alone read it, and leaves the room without acknowledging its existence.

On the whole, though, Milosevic seems to have charmed his Western interlocutors. According to Holbrooke, Warren Christopher, then the Secretary of State, observed of Milosevic that "had fate dealt him a different birthplace and education, he would have been a successful politician in a democratic system." Yes, Milosevic could be a petulant, irascible negotiator, but the 1995 peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, which ended the war in Bosnia, largely rehabilitated him internationally. The war criminal of the early nineteen-nineties was now a statesman.


Slobodan Milosevic

But there are limits to self-reinvention, and Milosevic is the sort of leader—the sort of dictator—who needs a war to keep his people distracted. After barely surviving a series of huge pro-democracy demonstrations in Belgrade and

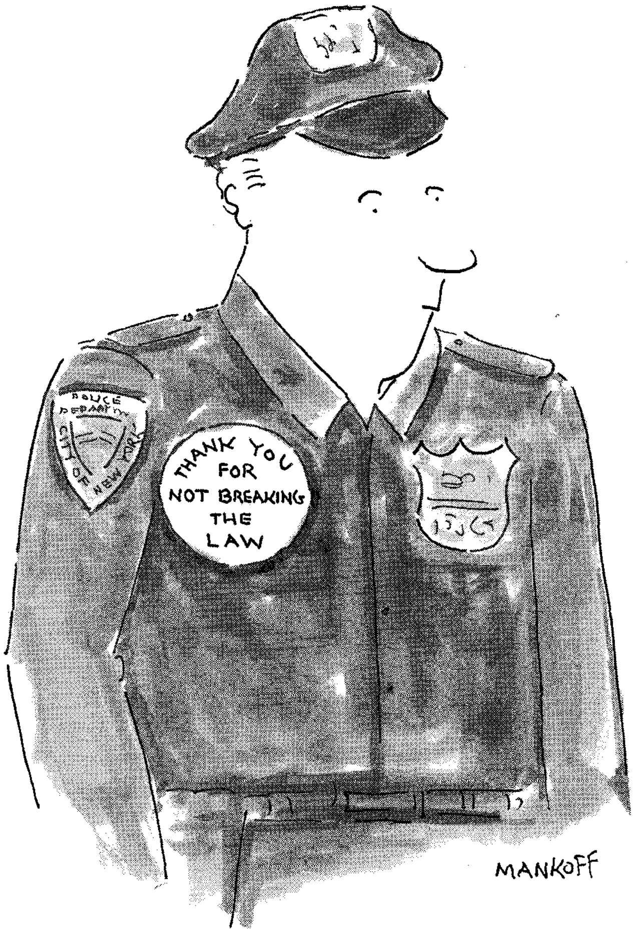
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

elsewhere in the winter of 1996-97, he turned to the great unfinished business of his tatterdemalion empire: Kosovo. The Kosovo question had not been addressed in the Dayton Agreement, and the long-suffering ethnic Albanians were finally resorting to armed resistance. The Serbs launched reprisals, and the ethnic-cleansing juggernaut was soon under way again. Last month, after international efforts to broker an agreement between the Serbs and the ethnic Albanians failed, Milosevic apparently decided to go all out.

This is where most of us came in—when NATO made good on its long-standing threats to start aerial bombing. Since then, Milosevic has been making monkeys of his big-power assailants. He is more popular than ever among Serbs, and the grim work in Kosovo seems to be going spectacularly. High-altitude bombing is useless, of course, against house-to-house ethnic cleansing. After two weeks of NATO assaults, estimates are that, out of nearly two million ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, about half have been driven from their homes, and nearly half of those have left Kosovo altogether. Bill Clinton and Tony Blair fume and sternly threaten. Milosevic, playing a far shrewder game, counts his winnings (demographic, political) and offers a ceasefire for Orthodox Easter. Seeing that the ocean of terrorized refugees pouring out of Kosovo is moving Western public opinion toward support for sending ground troops in to stop him, he abruptly closes the borders with Albania and Macedonia. Tens of thousands of desperate people are herded back into Kosovo, out of international sight. An awful silence falls, in which Milosevic begins to act almost as if the war were over. The three captured American soldiers can now be returned. So why is the great bully NATO continuing to bomb a small, peace-loving country, just as the Nazis did?

The truth is, we have no idea how horrendous the suffering inside Kosovo may be—the real damage, the death toll—though indications from refugees' accounts are dire. This moment is reminiscent of the lull that followed the Serb assault, led by Milosevic's comrade General Ratko Mladic, on the Bosnian "safe haven" of Srebrenica in 1995—of those days before we knew for certain that a terrible massacre had occurred. And the number of lives at risk this time is far, far greater. President Milosevic is not, in fact, the sole author of the tragedy of Yugoslavia. But he is its main villain, and the destruction of Kosovo has been entirely his affair. The world needs to bring down the curtain on his atavistic horror show.

—WILLIAM FINNEGAN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LETTER FROM BELGRADE

An ordinary task in an extraordinary time.

IT'S thundering. This time, it isn't the bombing, just an innocent announcement of a spring downpour. During the past few days, reality has taken to wearing a grotesque, threatening mask. Everything is as usual, but it isn't—fear and danger hang in the air. These days, all routine acts have been reduced to practical and rational necessity. Movement is restricted; many normal activities are a sheer indulgence. When the light bulb in my kitchen gives up the ghost, I decide it's a good enough reason to leave my place, on a quest for a new bulb.

I am on my way to the shop when the smell of early spring leads me in another direction—toward Kalmegdan, an ancient fortress, and its gardens, my favorite haven, where I like to go for long, meditative walks above the confluence of the Sava and the Danube Rivers. A maze of alleys takes me past a wall of the French Embassy; angry inscriptions cover it, as if some miserable spider had left its black trace. Violence begets violence. Only, in this situation, the violence coming from above is mighty, whereas the response from below is rather ineffective.

Once in Kalmegdan, I take a lower path above the Sava River and its port. On the other side of the river, willows, sunken in high waters up to their knees, couldn't care less in their bright, renewed greenery about terror and uncertainty. Spring has taken over, entirely unnoticed. I arrive at the feet of "The Victor," the famous monument sculpted by Mestrovic, commemorating a triumph over the Turks in 1912, during the First Balkan War. This sturdy Hercules was placed here, legend has it, because of his overly opulent private parts. The original plans had called for him to serve as a fountain decoration in one of the major squares, but the city fathers decided that his genitals posed a threat to the civilian population, so he ended up here, turned toward the innocent rivers.

Standing under the statue's menacing sword and peaceful dove, I recall a United States Marine base that I passed only a year and a half ago, driving through the Southern California desert. It seemed to me then like something from outer space—hideous as it was, it looked as if it were keeping some dark secret in its cocoon-like quarters. At the time, I couldn't have guessed that these "aliens" might visit us here, flying over a meadow beside the walls of the ancient fort, where local kids play weekend soccer games.

Today, there are only a few teenagers wandering around here. A boy in military camouflage trousers steps over the border between fashion trend and reality. Mostly, the young people are silent or whisper among themselves. One girl, with short hair dyed green, suddenly screeches hysterically, "Gimme a lighter! Somebody gimme a lighter!"

The chilly darkness of the air-raid shelters across from the zoo gates reminds me of my light-bulb mission. I go back to Knez Mihajlova, a pedestrian street. The windows of the German and British cultural centers are shattered, and Nazi symbols are scrawled on the walls. A group of young men with shaved heads is walking in front of me, and one of them jumps through a smashed window into the library of the British cultural center. Soon he leaps out, alarmed—someone has chased him away. He proceeds on, laughing with his pals at his futile attempt at a heroic gesture.

The street is half deserted. An eerie night silence is sneaking out from all its corners. Two guys in blue overalls are trying to replace the windowpanes on a trashed Air France storefront. A group of passersby storms on them with insults and abuse. A woman spits on them. In a similar manner, yesterday some people were throwing cobblestones at the building that houses the American Center. No one seemed to remember that the building belongs to Belgrade, and shows traces of shrapnel from the Second World War.

With darkness falling, I hurry to the store. Inside, last-minute customers are trying to stock up on food. I browse shelves that are still well supplied: American peanuts, German beer, English chocolate, French cheese. I ask a clerk if there are any light bulbs. She points and replies wearily, "Sure, right here—in front of your eyes."

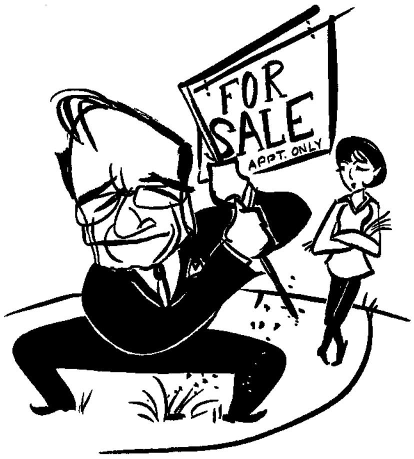
—STEFAN LAZAREVIC

FAX FROM LOS ANGELES

Keeping up with the Murdochs.

IN Hollywood, nothing enlivens people more than the sale of a consequential hunk of real estate. So it was hardly surprising that when Rupert Murdoch put his Beverly Hills mansion on the market last year, for $19.5 million, plenty of competitive curiosity-seekers came snooping. The status conferred by Los Angeles landholdings is determined by cachet as well as by cash value: the most desirable properties have historical or architectural significance. Murdoch's six-acre hilltop spread, in addition to a pool, tennis courts, and gardens, comes with an impeccable pedigree: the former home of Jules Stein, it was designed in 1926 by the romantic-revivalist architect Wallace Neff for the silent-film director Fred Niblo. "It's one of the most important houses in Los Angeles," David Mossler, Murdoch's broker, says.

The grand iron gates on winding Angelo Drive have swung open to admit a stream of prospective buyers. Although some of these house hunters were asked to provide banking references beforehand, presumably no such request was made of Michael Eisner, the C.E.O. of Disney; Jeffrey Katzenberg, of DreamWorks; Michael Ovitz, the agent turned manager; Will Smith, the movie star; or the director Dick Donner and his wife, the producer Lauren Shuler Donner, all of whom have come by to take a look at Murdoch's seventeen rooms filled with antiques.

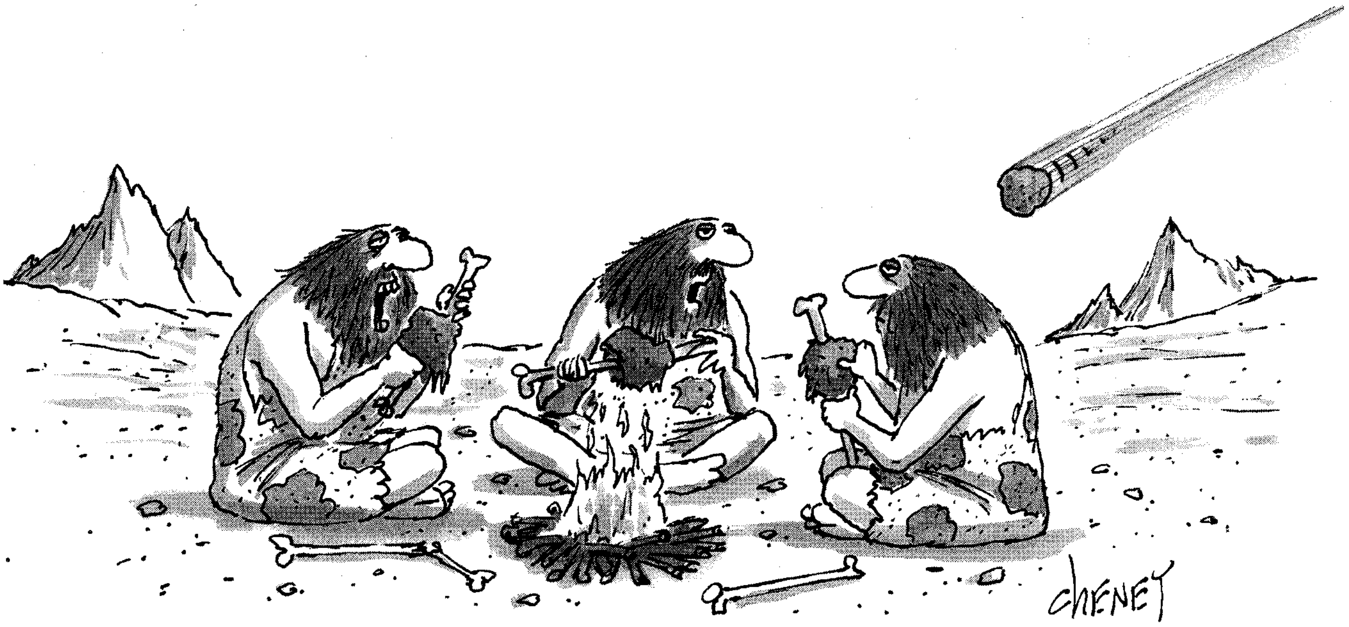


Rupert Murdoch and Wendy Deng

Despite all these visitors, serious bids were not forthcoming. It seems that none of the Hollywood types seriously contemplated buying the house. A spokesman for Eisner, who lives in a rambling mansion in Bel Air, suggested that the Disney boss would have had only an "architectural interest" in seeing the house. Ovitz, a big fan of Neff's architecture (both Madonna and Jon Peters live in Neff houses), apparently had no intention of moving out of his Brentwood home; in any case, the Murdoch place would be too small for a family with three children, such as his own. At the stratospheric reaches of the entertainment world, a seventeen-room mansion is considered a love nest.

Dick and Lauren Shuler Donner, however, were ready to move right in. "We went and looked at it a few months ago," Donner said over the telephone, "and we fell madly in love." The couple strolled the grounds, admiring the graceful archways and terraces. "The warmth of the house—it's hard to describe, it's an emotional experience," he said. "But then the Realtor told us the asking price. And we said, 'Oh my God, it's beyond us.'" Donner said that even if Neff's masterwork is out of his range he's glad he saw it. "It gives you inspiration—you want to do a couple of hit movies, so that maybe, someday, you can have something like that."

The mansion, which the Realtor's



"You've got mail."

• •

brochure describes as a "Tuscan manor" with a "circular stone facade" and "commanding views of Los Angeles from downtown to the ocean," had been the Murdochs' primary residence before Rupert and his wife, Anna, decided to divorce last year. He has since relocated to lower Manhattan, where he is renovating a six-million-dollar penthouse.

According to his colleagues at News Corp., Murdoch became slightly annoyed when his Realtor showed him a list of the luminaries who had been poking around his house. He was heard to remark, "I'm sick and tired of having moguls visit my house and rifle through my desk." (Murdoch's spokesman, Howard Rubenstein, denies that his client made such a comment.)

Late last month, Murdoch still had not received a viable offer on the house, so he took it off the market. "He realized that it is irreplaceable, and he has decided to keep it," David Mossler says. Howard Rubenstein adds that, when the market improves, Murdoch may put the house up for sale again, although for now he intends to use it. Friends speculate that Murdoch plans to enjoy the house with his new girlfriend, a thirty-two-year-old News Corp. executive named Wendy Deng, with whom he has been telling people he is in love. After all, the seventeen-room Wallace Neff mansion near the top of Angelo Drive is an ideal love nest. —NANCY GRIFFIN

THE BOARDS

First-night jitters as the Marx Brothers take the stage.

THE 1933 political farce "Duck Soup" was, as of last week, one of the few Marx Brothers movies to be adapted for and presented live on the stage—namely, the stage of the Yale Cabaret, in New Haven. The adapters were Will Frears and Remy-Luc Auberjonois, who are first-year students at the Yale Drama School. Frears was the director. An hour or so before the opening—at the end of an allotted rehearsal time of four weeks—he stood amid the tables in the hundred-seat theatre, nervously chewing on a pen.

"It was brilliant as a movie, but tonight it may all fall apart," he said. "Maybe I'm no good. My ongoing terror is, nobody will laugh." Frears speaks in a low-key British accent, and that day he was gray in the face, spiky-haired, unshaven, and unslept. He somewhat resembled a young Donald Sutherland.

"I saw 'Duck Soup' for the first time when I was twelve, on television in England," he said. "I fell in love with the movie instantly—with Groucho as Rufus T. Firefly, the leader of the mythical country of Freedonia, with Harpo and Chico as the spies, with Zeppo as the leader's aide. By the time I came here, to go to college—Sarah Lawrence—I knew every pun, every gag, every bit of business. I wrote my undergraduate thesis on the movies of the nineteen-thirties—its title was 'O Brother, Where Art Thou?: Representations of Historical and Mythical Populism in Movies of the 1930s.'

"In order to stage it, we pared the script down to the minimum. The movie opens with a closeup shot of ducks swimming in a cauldron over a fire. Nobody has ever explained, Why ducks? Brilliant! Very funny. But ducks had nothing to do with the rest of the movie! Besides, how could we have ducks in this space? We had to lose them."

A girl, in knickers and a large old-fashioned newsboy's cap, came over and showed him the top copy of a bundle of fake newspapers. "Just got them," she said cheerily. The headline read "FIREFLY APPOINTED LEADER OF FREEDONIA."

"Looks good," Frears said, glumly.

"As soon as rehearsals started, I decided I want to direct musicals forever,"

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TABLETS, SYRUP, and RAPIDLY-DISINTEGRATING TABLETS

BRIEF SUMMARY (For full Prescribing Information, see package insert.)

INDICATIONS AND USAGE: CLARITIN is indicated for the relief of nasal and non-nasal symptoms *of seasonal allergic rhinitis and for the treatment of chronic idiopathic urticaria in patients 6 years of* age or older.

CONTRAINDICATIONS: CLARITIN is contraindicated in patients who are hypersensitive to this medication or to any of its ingredients.

PRECAUTIONS: General: Patients with liver impairment or renal insufficiency (GFR < 30 mL/min) should be given a lower initial dose (10 mg every other day). (See **CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY: Special Populations.)**

Drug Interactions: Loratadine (10 mg once daily) has been coadministered with therapeutic doses of erythromycin, cimetidine, and ketoconazole in controlled clinical pharmacology studies in adult volunteers. Although increased plasma concentrations (AUC 0-24 hrs) of loratadine and/or descarboethoxyloratadine were observed following coadministration of loratadine with each of these drugs in normal volunteers (n = 24 in each study), there were no clinically relevant changes in the safety profile of loratadine, as assessed by electrocardiographic parameters, clinical laboratory tests, vital signs, and adverse events. There were no significant effects on QT_c intervals, and no reports of sedation or syncope. No effects on plasma concentrations of cimetidine or ketoconazole were observed. Plasma concentrations (AUC 0-24 hrs) of erythromycin decreased 15% with coadministration of loratadine relative to that observed with erythromycin alone. The clinical relevance of this difference is unknown. These above findings are summarized in the following table:

Effects on Plasma Concentrations (AUC 0-24 hrs) of Loratadine and Descarboethoxyloratadine After 10 Days of Coadministration (Loratadine 10 mg) in Normal Volunteers

	Loratadine	Descarboethoxyloratadine
Erythromycin (500 mg Q8h)	+ 40%	+46%
Cimetidine (300 mg QID)	+103%	+ 6%
Ketoconazole (200 mg Q12h)	*+307%*	*+73%*

There does not appear to be an increase in adverse events in subjects who received oral contraceptives and loratadine.

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, and Impairment of Fertility: In an 18-month carcinogenicity study in mice and a 2-year study in rats, loratadine was administered in the diet at doses up to 40 mg/kg (mice) and 25 mg/kg (rats). In the carcinogenicity studies, pharmacokinetic assessments were carried out to determine animal exposure to the drug. AUC data demonstrated that the exposure of mice given 40 mg/kg of loratadine was 3.6 (loratadine) and 18 (descarboethoxyloratadine) *times higher than in humans given the maximum recommended daily oral dose. Exposure of rats* given 25 mg/kg of loratadine was 28 (loratadine) and 67 (descarboethoxyloratadine) times higher than in humans given the maximum recommended daily oral dose. Male mice given 40 mg/kg had a significantly higher incidence of hepatocellular tumors (combined adenomas and carcinomas) than concurrent controls. In rats, a significantly higher incidence of hepatocellular tumors (combined adenomas and carcinomas) was observed in males given 10 mg/kg and males and females given 25 mg/kg. The clinical significance of these findings during long-term use of CLARITIN is not known.

In mutagenicity studies, there was no evidence of mutagenic potential in reverse (Ames) or forward point *mutation (CHO-HGPRT) assays, or in the assay for DNA damage (rat primary hepatocyte* unscheduled DNA assay) or in two assays for chromosomal aberrations (human peripheral blood lymphocyte clastogenesis assay and the mouse bone marrow erythrocyte micronucleus assay). In the mouse lymphoma assay, a positive finding occurred in the nonactivated but not the activated phase of the study.

Decreased fertility in male rats, shown by lower female conception rates, occurred at an oral dose of 64 mg/kg (approximately 50 times the maximum recommended human daily oral dose on a mg/m^2 basis) and was reversible with cessation of dosing. Loratadine had no effect on male or female fertility or reproduction in the rat at an oral dose of approximately 24 mg/kg (approximately 20 times the maximum recommended human daily oral dose on a mg/m^2 basis).

Pregnancy Category B: There was no evidence of animal teratogenicity in studies performed in rats and rabbits at oral doses up to 96 mg/kg (approximately 75 times and 150 times, respectively, the maximum recommended human daily oral dose on a mg/m^2 basis). There are, however, no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Because animal reproduction studies are not always predictive of human response, CLARITIN should be used during pregnancy only if clearly needed.

Nursing Mothers: Loratadine and its metabolite, descarboethoxyloratadine, pass easily into breast milk and achieve concentrations that are equivalent to plasma levels with an AUC_{milk}/AUC_{plasma} ratio of 1.17 and 0.85 for loratadine and descarboethoxyloratadine, respectively. Following a single oral dose of 40 mg, a small amount of loratadine and descarboethoxyloratadine was excreted into the breast milk (approximately 0.03% of 40 mg over 48 hours). A decision should be made whether to discontinue nursing or to discontinue the drug, taking into account the importance of the drug to the mother. Caution should be exercised when CLARITIN is administered to a nursing woman.

Pediatric Use: The safety of CLARITIN Syrup at a daily dose of 10 mg has been demonstrated in 188 pediatric patients 6-12 years of age in placebo-controlled 2-week trials. The effectiveness of *CLARITIN for the treatment of seasonal allergic rhinitis and chronic idiopathic urticaria in this pediatric* age group is based on an extrapolation of the demonstrated efficacy of CLARITIN in adults in these conditions and the likelihood that the disease course, pathophysiology, and the drug's effect are substantially similar to that of the adults. The recommended dose for the pediatric population is based on cross-study comparison of the pharmacokinetics of CLARITIN in adults and pediatric subjects and on the safety profile of loratadine in both adults and pediatric patients at doses equal to or higher than the recommended doses. The safety and effectiveness of CLARITIN in pediatric patients under 6 years of age have not been established.

ADVERSE REACTIONS: CLARITIN Tablets: Approximately 90,000 patients, aged 12 and older, received CLARITIN Tablets 10 mg once daily in controlled and uncontrolled studies. Placebo-controlled clinical trials at the recommended dose of 10 mg once a day varied from 2 weeks' to 6 months' duration. The rate of premature withdrawal from these trials was approximately 2% in both the treated and placebo groups.

REPORTED ADVERSE EVENTS WITH AN INCIDENCE OF MORE THAN 2% IN PLACEBO-CONTROLLED ALLERGIC RHINITIS CLINICAL TRIALS IN PATIENTS 12 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

PERCENT OF PATIENTS REPORTING

	LORATADINE 10 mg QD n = 1926	**PLACEBO** n = 2545	**CLEMASTINE** 1 mg BID n = 536	**TERFENADINE** 60 mg BID n = 684
Headache	12	11	8	8
Somnolence	8	6	22	9
Fatigue	4	3	10	2
Dry Mouth	3	2	4	3

Adverse events reported in placebo-controlled chronic idiopathic urticaria trials were similar to those reported in allergic rhinitis studies.

Adverse event rates did not appear to differ significantly based on age, sex, or race, although the number of nonwhite subjects was relatively small.

CLARITIN REDITABS (loratadine rapidly-disintegrating tablets): Approximately 500 patients received CLARITIN REDITABS (loratadine rapidly-disintegrating tablets) in controlled clinical trials of 2 weeks' duration. In these studies, adverse events were similar in type and frequency to those seen with CLARITIN Tablets and placebo.

Administration of CLARITIN REDITABS (loratadine rapidly-disintegrating tablets) did not result in an increased reporting frequency of mouth or tongue irritation.

CLARITIN Syrup: Approximately 300 pediatric patients 6 to 12 years of age received 10 mg loratadine once daily in controlled clinical trials for a period of 8-15 days. Among these, 188 children were treated with 10 mg loratadine syrup once daily in placebo-controlled trials. Adverse events in these pediatric patients were observed to occur with type and frequency similar to those seen in the adult population. The rate of premature discontinuance due to adverse events among pediatric patients receiving loratadine 10 mg daily was less than 1%.

ADVERSE EVENTS OCCURRING WITH A FREQUENCY OF ≥ 2% IN LORATADINE SYRUP-TREATED PATIENTS (6-12 YEARS OLD) IN PLACEBO-CONTROLLED TRIALS, AND MORE FREQUENTLY THAN IN THE PLACEBO GROUP

PERCENT OF PATIENTS REPORTING

	LORATADINE 10 mg QD n = 188	**PLACEBO** n = 262	**CHLORPHENIRAMINE** 2-4 mg BID/TID n = 170
Nervousness	4	2	2
Wheezing	4	2	5
Fatigue	3	2	5
Hyperkinesia	3	1	1
Abdominal Pain	2	0	0
Conjunctivitis	2	<1	1
Dysphonia	2	<1	0
Malaise	2	0	1
Upper Respiratory Tract Infection	2	<1	0

In addition to those adverse events reported above (≥ 2%), the following adverse events have been reported in at least one patient in CLARITIN clinical trials in adult and pediatric patients:

Autonomic Nervous System: Altered lacrimation, altered salivation, flushing, hypoesthesia, impotence, increased sweating, thirst.

Body As A Whole: Angioneurotic edema, asthenia, back pain, blurred vision, chest pain, earache, eye pain, fever, leg cramps, malaise, rigors, tinnitus, viral infection, weight gain.

Cardiovascular System: Hypertension, hypotension, palpitations, supraventricular tachyarrhythmias, syncope, tachycardia.

Central and Peripheral Nervous System: Blepharospasm, dizziness, dysphonia, hypertonia, migraine, paresthesia, tremor, vertigo.

Gastrointestinal System: Altered taste, anorexia, constipation, diarrhea, dyspepsia, flatulence, gastritis, hiccup, increased appetite, nausea, stomatitis, toothache, vomiting.

Musculoskeletal System: Arthralgia, myalgia.

Psychiatric: Agitation, amnesia, anxiety, confusion, decreased libido, depression, impaired concentration, insomnia, irritability, paroniria.

Reproductive System: Breast pain, dysmenorrhea, menorrhagia, vaginitis.

Respiratory System: Bronchitis, bronchospasm, coughing, dyspnea, epistaxis, hemoptysis, laryngitis, nasal dryness, pharyngitis, sinusitis, sneezing.

Skin and Appendages: Dermatitis, dry hair, dry skin, photosensitivity reaction, pruritus, purpura, rash, urticaria.

Urinary System: Altered micturition, urinary discoloration, urinary incontinence, urinary retention.

In addition, the following spontaneous adverse events have been reported rarely during the marketing of loratadine: abnormal hepatic function, including jaundice, hepatitis, and hepatic necrosis; alopecia; anaphylaxis; breast enlargement; erythema multiforme; peripheral edema; and seizures.

OVERDOSAGE: In adults, somnolence, tachycardia, and headache have been reported with overdoses greater than 10 mg with the Tablet formulation (40 to 180 mg). Extrapyramidal signs and palpitations have been reported in children with overdoses of greater than 10 mg of CLARITIN Syrup. In the event of overdosage, general symptomatic and supportive measures should be instituted promptly and maintained for as long as necessary.

Treatment of overdosage would reasonably consist of emesis (ipecac syrup), except in patients with impaired consciousness, followed by the administration of activated charcoal to absorb any remaining drug. If vomiting is unsuccessful, or contraindicated, gastric lavage should be performed with normal saline. Saline cathartics may also be of value for rapid dilution of bowel contents. Loratadine is not eliminated by hemodialysis. It is not known if loratadine is eliminated by peritoneal dialysis.

No deaths occurred at oral doses up to 5000 mg/kg in rats and mice (greater than 2400 and 1200 *times, respectively, the maximum recommended human daily oral dose on a mg/m^2 basis). Single* oral doses of loratadine showed no effects in rats, mice, and monkeys at doses as high as 10 times the maximum recommended human daily oral dose on a mg/m^2 basis.

Schering

Schering Corporation
Kenilworth, NJ 07033 USA

Rev. 3/98

19628426T-JBS

CLARITIN REDITABS (loratadine rapidly-disintegrating tablets) are manufactured for Schering Corporation by Scherer DDS, England.

U.S. Patent Nos. 4,282,233 and 4,371,516.

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Frears went on. "Our Groucho is a girl, Dara Fisher. At first, she wasn't doing the walk right. I didn't say anything to her, because I wanted to give her time to figure it out. Like the rest of the cast, she watched the movie every night before going to bed. Then, suddenly, she got the walk!

"My wardrobe people have been magnificent! Harpo's top hat was hard to find, so he made himself one, but they got him the raincoat and sewed on five pockets, for his alarm clock and stuff. Our budget was a hundred dollars. That's a lot. We had to buy cigars and peanuts, and Harpo's wig alone cost twenty dollars.

"As the opening got closer, everybody was operating on some level of exhaustion. The other night, rehearsal was chaos. Nobody knew his lines. Everybody was trying to be funny. I told them, 'You're all straight men, all of you, except Groucho, Harpo, and Chico. I don't want *any*body else trying to be funny!' The entire play was taking forty-five minutes. I had to slow it down. Since then, I've been worrying. My mother and dad—he's the movie director Stephen Frears—are coming to one performance. I'm almost afraid to have them see it.

"The Marx Brothers were absurdists before there were absurdists. Antonin Artaud's theory is that a destruction of all reality in the mind is the perfect definition of humor. 'Duck Soup' was the first time that government was ridiculed in this way. For the first time in the movies, plot became secondary. I keep telling myself, good jokes are always funny. When one character says, 'This is a gala day for you,' and Groucho says, 'Well, a gal a day is enough for me,' that's funny, but will this audience laugh?"

The tables were filling up with young people, most of them buzzing with self-preoccupation.

"Everyone now is so jaded, but I'm hoping there's still a hankering for the pure and simple," Frears said. "How will they take the bad puns? Chico always says, 'That's a good one.' Will any of these people say, 'What's the point?' "

The lights dimmed. Frears looked numb as the play began. Onstage, the Newsboy was crossing, shouting "Extra! Extra! Firefly appointed new leader of Freedonia!" The audience started giggling expectantly, and they never stopped hooting and applauding and whistling and groaning with enjoyment all the way through to the end.

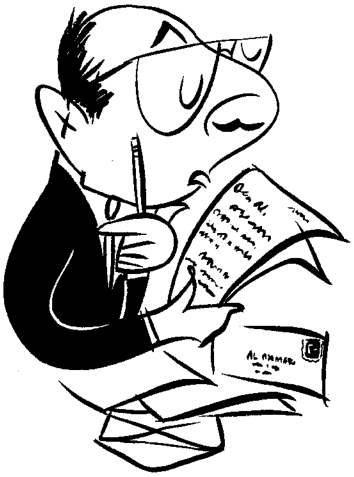
—LILLIAN ROSS

INK

New York's unwittingly hip former senator joins the Fourth Estate.

JOURNALISTS have called Alfonse D'Amato many things during his long and variously distinguished career. Now they can call him a colleague. "Ask Alfonse," D'Amato's new column, premières next week in *George* magazine. In it the former senator will offer "advice for politics and life," answering readers' questions on topics ranging from George Stephanopoulos to tiramisù.

D'Amato's newfound membership in the media élite—he is also a regular commentator on the Fox News Channel—is part of what press accounts have described as a post-election makeover. According to the gossip columns, D'Amato has in recent months become a habitué of some of Manhattan's trendiest restaurants and night clubs, and, in an unlikely pairing, he has been romantically linked with Candace Bushnell, the author of "Sex and the City." Joe Conason, a political columnist for the New York *Observer*, recently marvelled that defeat seems to have transformed the erstwhile Senator Pothole into "an urbane king of cool"—a transformation Conason labelled nothing short of "miraculous."



Alfonse D'Amato

In an interview in the office of another one of his new ventures, a consulting firm, D'Amato insisted he was unchanged. He would, he implied, still call a "putzhead" a "putzhead" if the occasion arose, and as a private citizen he has been liberated from even the last remnants of Washington protocol. "I don't have to go 'my distinguished colleague' when he's not distinguished," he explained.

Indeed, despite the restaurants and the canoodling, D'Amato does seem very much the same. When I arrived at the office, on Park Avenue, he was running late, and I had to wait at a desk where, either by chance or by design, a list of phone messages had been left; they included calls from a deputy mayor, a high-ranking state official, and the governor of New York. At one point during our talk, D'Amato tried to persuade me to fill out a subscription form for *George*, and he boasted that he had successfully pressured thirty-six associates into doing just that.

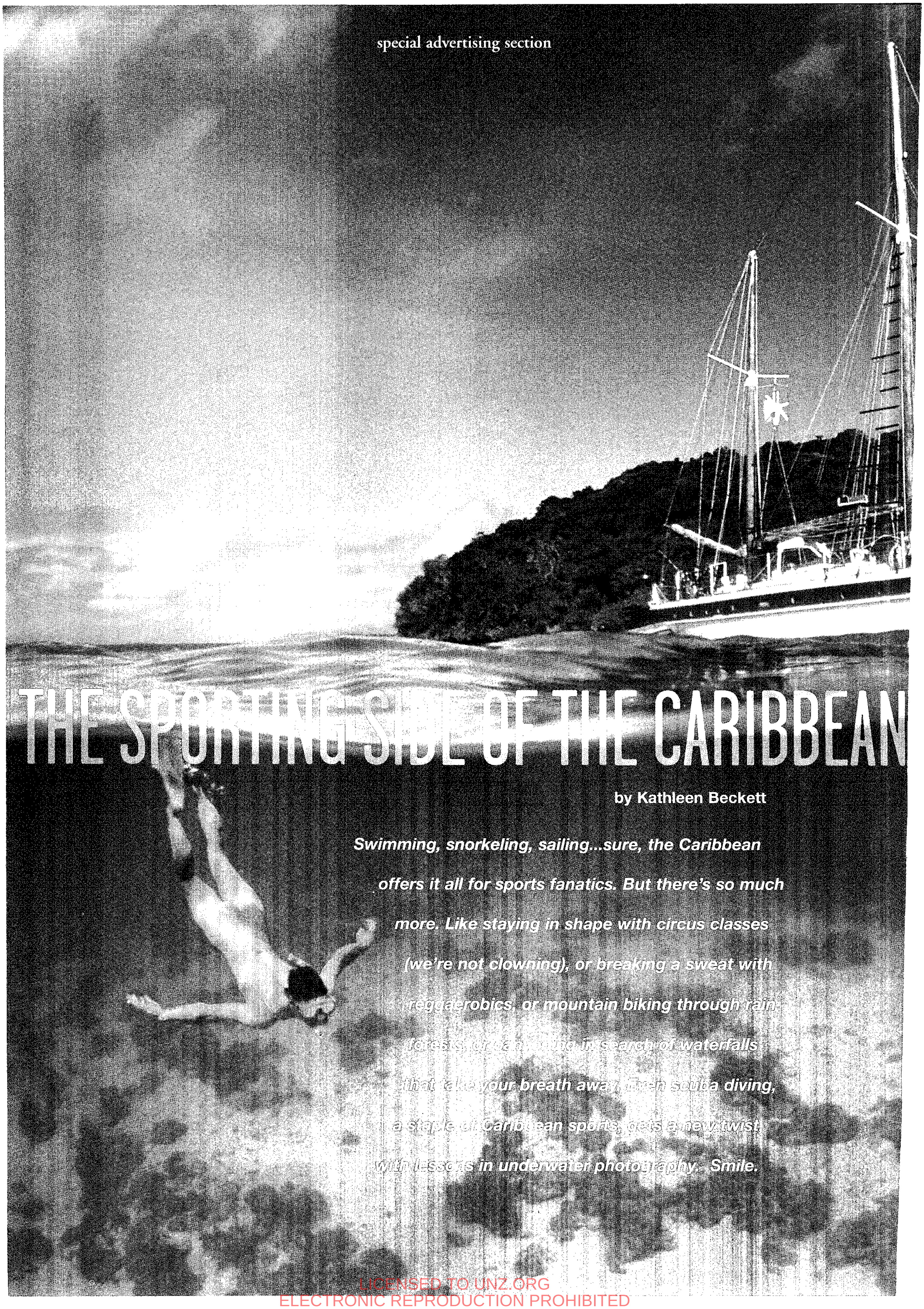
"Every one of my clients who comes in, you know what I make them do?" he asked. "Fill it out. Otherwise, I won't talk to you."

As a political analyst, D'Amato still tends more toward the pragmatic than the ideological. He called the war in Kosovo "one of the great disasters," accused his Republican colleagues of bungling the impeachment process, and predicted that Hillary Clinton would not run for Senate.

The idea for the *George* column arose out of a conversation D'Amato had with a mutual friend of his and the magazine's editor, John Kennedy, Jr. Signing up D'Amato generated a good bit of publicity for *George*, and the move clearly had a lot of appeal as journalistic kitsch: what could be more unhiply hip than the Town of Hempstead?

But, as is so often the case in such arrangements, it is hard to say exactly whose tongue is in whose cheek. Though D'Amato was chary about the details of his column, he said he was having "a ball," and he seemed genuinely gratified at being remunerated for opinions he used to give away free. "You can agree with me or disagree with me, and I get paid to do it, which is a lot of fun," he said. "I mean, that is just absolutely wonderful."

—ELIZABETH KOLBERT



THE SPORTING SIDE OF THE CARIBBEAN

by Kathleen Beckett

Swimming, snorkeling, sailing...sure, the Caribbean offers it all for sports fanatics. But there's so much more. Like staying in shape with circus classes (we're not clowning), or breaking a sweat with reggaerobics, or mountain biking through rain forests, or canyoning in search of waterfalls that take your breath away. Even scuba diving, a staple of Caribbean sports, gets a new twist with lessons in underwater photography. Smile.

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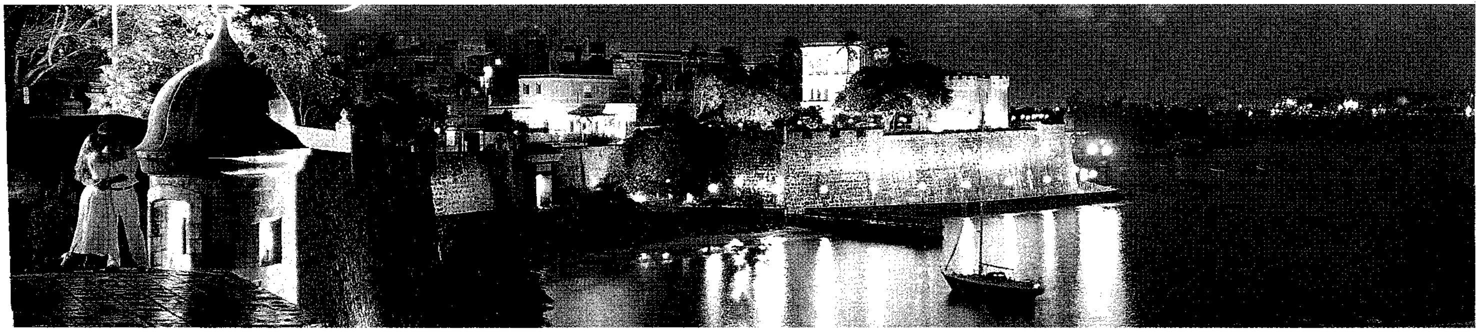

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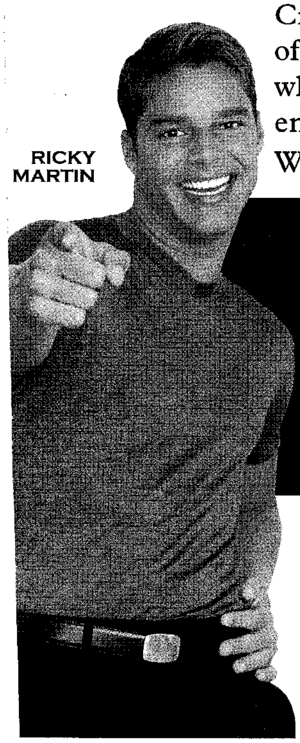

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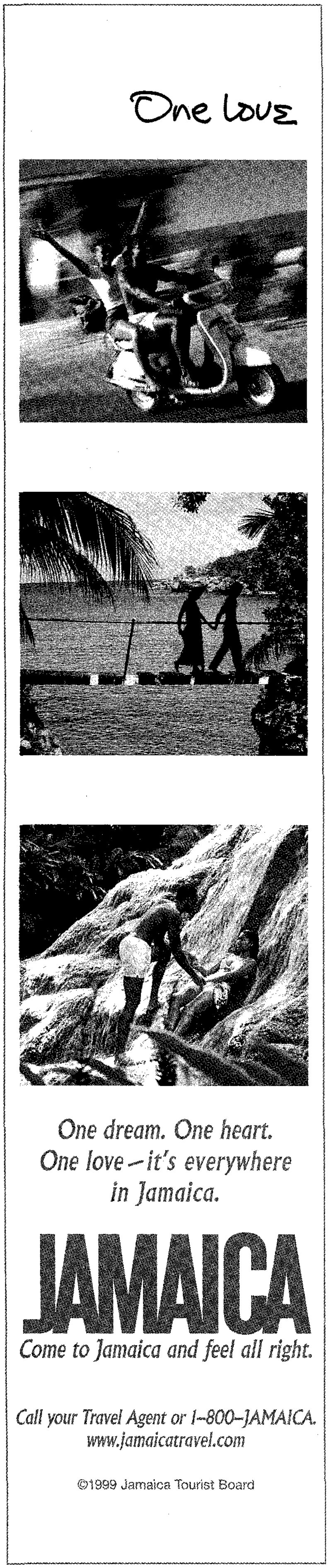
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For vacationers from the continental United States, Puerto Rico has direct, non-stop flight convenience and close proximity in its favor. For sports aficionados there's even more reason to visit. Where else will golfers find eighteen courses, including twelve championship links most of which are designed by the top names in golf? Hikers have a choice of seventeen different forest preserves threading through exotic flora and fauna that have remained virtually unchanged since the day Columbus first sighted Puerto Rico some five hundred years ago. Nature tours will take you rappelling down ancient mountain peaks, trekking past coffee plantations and Indian sites, bird-watching, whale-spotting, and turtle-viewing. Spelunkers can explore one of the world's most impressive discoveries, the massive, three-hundred-acre Río Camuy Cave network. Guided tours highlight the eerie stalagmites and stalagtites that have formed underground over centuries.

Bob Krist/Puerto Rico Tourism Co.

Three brand new golf courses have recently been added to Puerto Rico's ample choices.

For a special thrill, try body-rafting on an undulating segment of the Tanamá River. The voyage kicks off with a nearly vertical five-hundred-foot slide down into the river, followed by a three-hundred-foot glide through caves and canyons. Less thrill-seeking water worshippers have a remarkable 272 miles of golden beach to savor. More thrills and spills are coming up May 20th when boxing greats Felix Tito Trinidad and Vincent Pettway meet in the rink.

CAYMAN ISLANDS, DIVER'S UTOPIA

Recreational diving began in the Caribbean decades ago, and today there are more than fifty dive operations in the Cayman Islands alone that keep the sport alive and well. Classes in underwater photography are increasingly popular. Little Cayman's first-rate fishing is rivaled only by its spectacular dive sites.

On Cayman Brac, the M/V Capt. Keith Tibbetts, a 330-foot Russian naval destroyer, is a popular dive site. Divers may explore swim-throughs including such locations as the vessel's bridge and upper decks, and they can view missile launchers and gun turrets, which are still affixed to the deck.

Topside, Cayman Brac offers hikers and those interested in caving the opportunity to explore a 140-foot limestone bluff on the island.

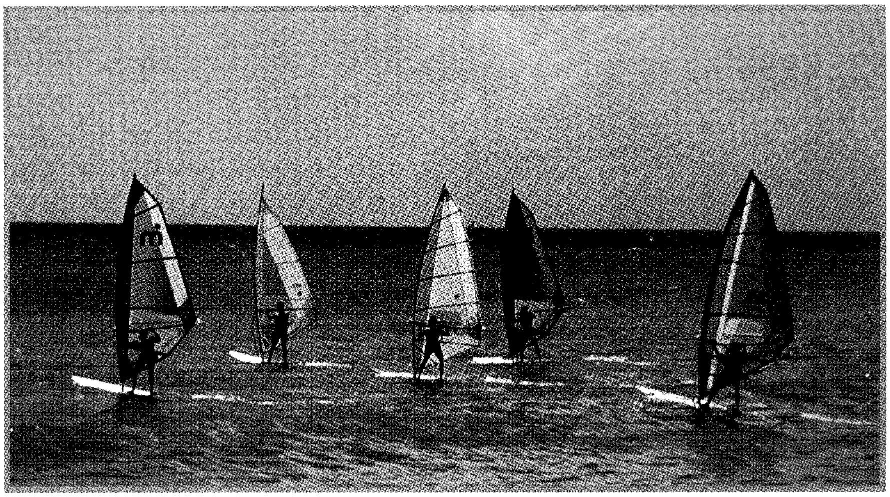
The National Trust is busy creating alternatives to water sports. One new excursion features strolls along narrow footpaths carved out

Cayman Islands Department of Tourism

Grand Cayman's Stingray City attracts snorkelers and scuba enthusiasts alike.

cover photograph: Darryl Torckler/Tony Stone Images

over the centuries by locals traversing the island. The new two-mile Mastic Trail cuts across the island through mangrove forests and savannah grasslands. Silver Thatch Excursions, led by a former National Trust official who helped develop the trail, provides sanctioned tours of the interior, opening a new window on Cayman ecology and history.



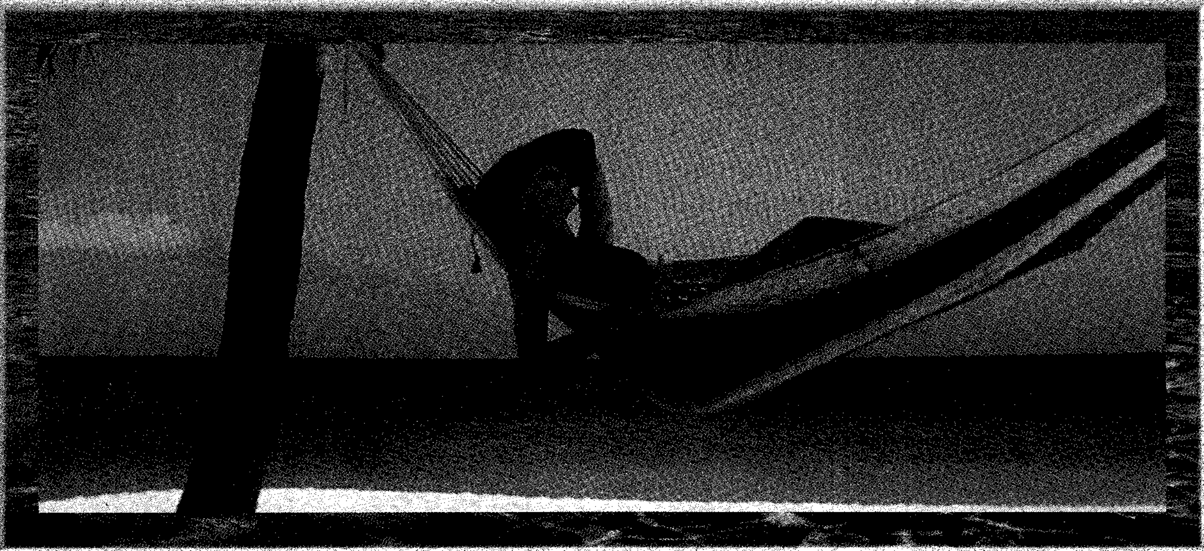
Strength in numbers: Bajan South Coast is known as one of the world's best for windsurfing.

BARBADOS: SPORTS WITH A BRITISH TWIST

Barbados' Anglo heritage is so pervasive that even their sports have a British accent. Bajans are passionate about cricket, rugby, and polo, but the island known as "Little England" is also host to an annual surfers' competition that takes place along a curved stretch of rugged Atlantic coastline known as the "Soup Bowl." Farther down the coast, an international windsurfing world cup championship also provides colorful spectacles.

The crashing sea has taken its toll on many a ship, and scuba divers have numerous wreck sites to explore. At Carlisle Bay alone, four ships sank so close together, they can all be seen in a single dive.

Some sports fans never venture beyond the splendid sailing, snorkeling, and splashing to be had off the silvery beaches of the tony Platinum Coast on the western shore. But Barbados holds other enticing treasures. Deserted tropical forests, secluded bays, historic plantations, and the craggy "Little Scotland" district are all reachable on island safaris in Land Rovers that can penetrate places other vehicles only dream about.



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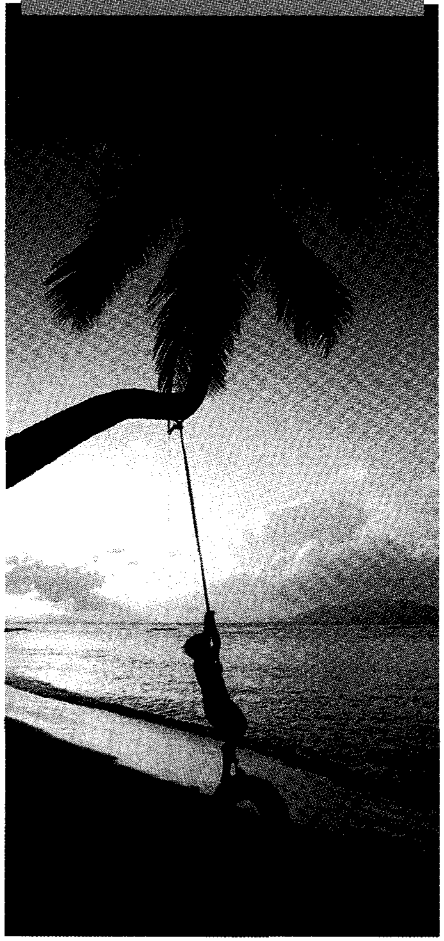

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THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS
NATURE'S LITTLE SECRETS

FROLICKING IN JAMAICA

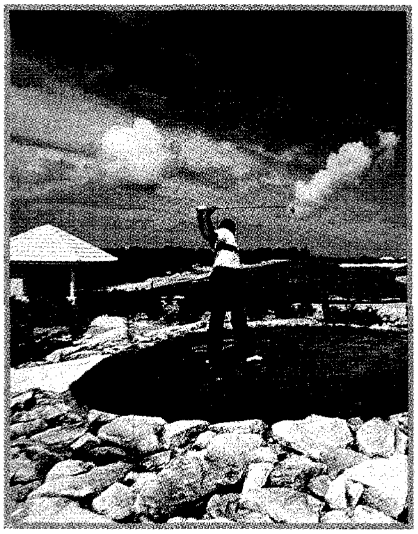
Not all of Jamaica's water sports are salty. There's the fun of rafting down freshwater streams that wend through tropical forests. Or letting someone else pole a bamboo raft for two that takes you gliding silently down the Rio Grande River.

Mountain biking is becoming big on this mountainous island. One new excursion starts off at daybreak five thousand feet above sea level in the cool air of the Blue Mountains. By day's end, bikers have passed through coffee plantations, enjoyed a spicy Jamaican lunch, and splashed in a waterfall at the end of the trail. Equestrian events such as polo tournaments and dressage can be enjoyed simply by sitting back and watching the show.

TEAM BVI

With sixty islands stretched across miles of clear turquoise sea, the BVI are a favorite with boaters. Throughout the year, there are several races and events where sailors can show their stuff—and where spectators can join the fun. From June 11th through 13th, the fifth annual Caribbean team-racing championship, the Carib Cup pits last year's winner, Team St. Thomas, against the BVI team, followed by three days of parties.

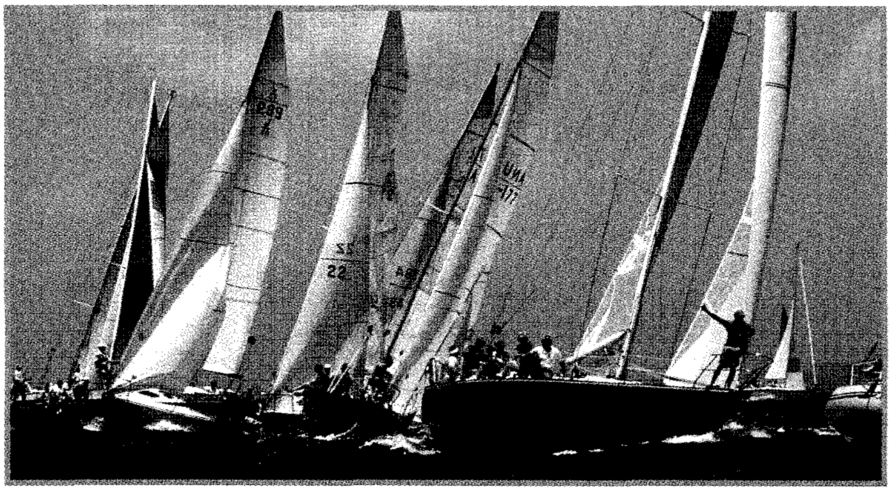
Windsurfers can join in "The World's Greatest Windsurfing & Sailing Adventure," the Bacardi Hi-Ho from June 26th through July 3rd. Days are reserved for sailing and windsurfing between eight islands, while nights are devoted to partying.



Tee-time at the 72-par Provo Golf Club just off Grace Bay in the Turks and Caicos.

COURTING THE TURKS AND CAICOS

Friendly animals are everywhere on these untrammeled islands and they make their presence known. Diving, for instance, is frequently accompanied by the eerie song of a male humpback whale serenading a prospective sweetie. Up until the end of this month, some 2,500 humpback whales will pass through the twenty-two-mile-wide Turks Island passage on their way to mate,



The British Virgin Islands plays host to the annual Carib Cup.

providing a daily show for spectators. Another spectator sport is observing the underwater courting of what looks like thousands of glowworms which, following each full moon, add their iridescent glimmer to the waters.

Those who want to fish will find these waters teeming with tuna, bonefish, wahoo, mahi-mahi, kingfish, and sailfish. But the big catch is marlin. Most weigh a hundred to two hundred pounds, and they emerge from the water in leaps worthy of Baryshnikov.

EXPLORING DOMINICA

They say that Dominica is undiscovered. No one knows how many years the Milton Waterfall sent a hundred feet of water cascading into a pool before the knowledge of its beauty became widespread. Now it's a prime hiking destination. Anyone out for a good time will enjoy the "Dive Fest" July 3rd through 11th, which mixes fun like underwater treasure hunts, moonlight cruises, and street parties with environmentally conscious beach cleanups.

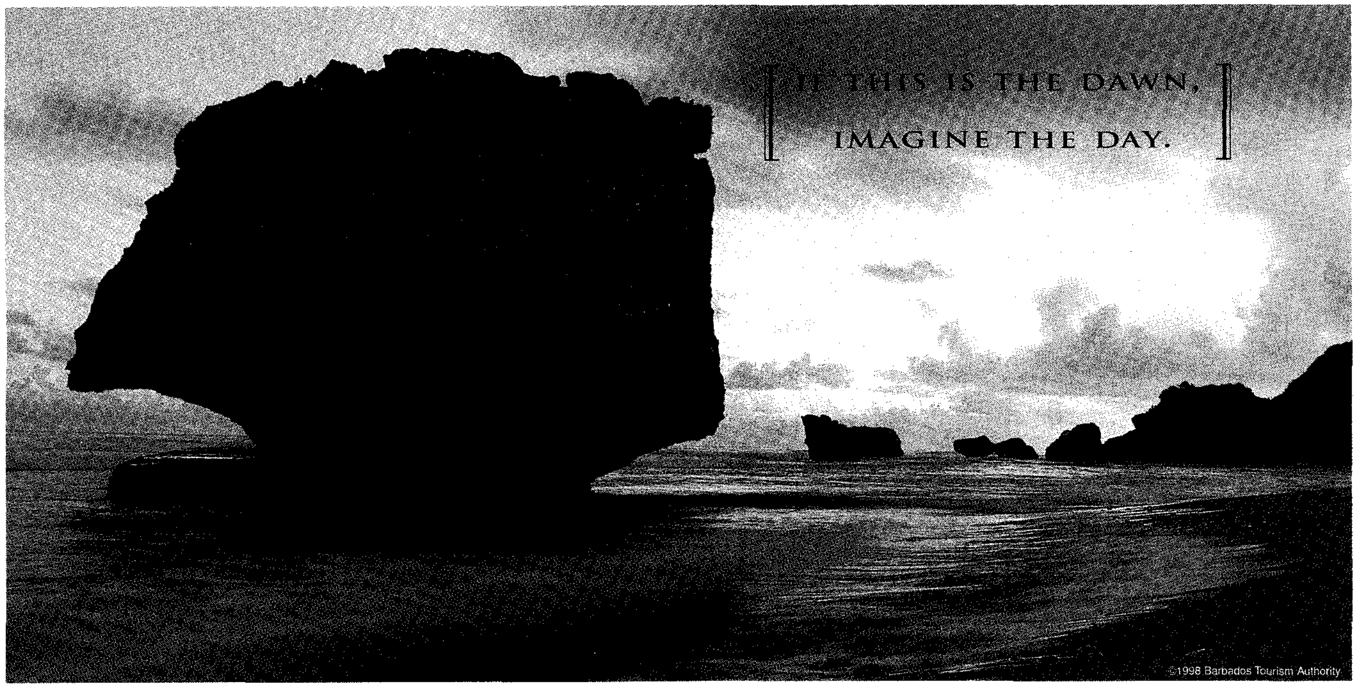
ADVENTURES ON MARTINIQUE

Ah, the French know how to live. In Martinique, swimming might mean sipping rum punches while standing in the shallow waters of La baignoire de Joséphine, where Napoleon Bonaparte's wife liked to bathe. With its lush ecology, the island offers land-based sports with a similar flair: *le cyclisme* on eighteen-speed VTTs (all-terrain bikes); hiking on a network of more than thirty trails; and discovering hidden gorges with dazzling waterfalls—perfect spots for *les pique-niques*.

ECO-CONSCIOUS ST. LUCIA

Here, there's no shortage of seaworthy sports, whether deep-sea fishing, scuba diving, or sailing aboard the Unicorn, a 140-foot replica of a nineteenth-century brig used in the filming of "Roots." But through the government of St. Lucia and the St. Lucia National Trust, the island is making great strides in ecotourism too, as it seeks to find

Catch of the day: Fishermen meet in St. Lucia each fall for the Bill Fishing Tournament.



IMAGINE EVERY SHADE OF BLUE UNVEILING BEFORE YOU, SPILLING ACROSS A LIMITLESS SKY. HERE, THE HORIZON IS FILLED WITH POSSIBILITY. YOU CAN SPEND ALL DAY ON SHORES OF PINK AND WHITE SAND. LOSE YOURSELF IN A FLOWER FOREST. PLAY A ROUND ON TROPICAL GREENS. HERE, THERE ARE A THOUSAND BEAUTIFUL WAYS YOUR DAY CAN UNFOLD.
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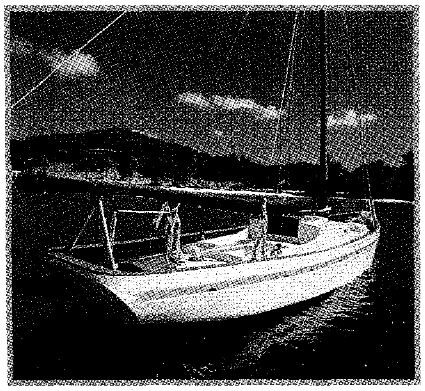
ways to preserve its unspoiled resources. The island's rich interior and intriguing history are showcased by new hiking and horseback trails through the rain forest, mineral baths where Napoleon's troops once soaked, and the world's only drive-in volcano.

JOLLY GOOD CRICKET IN ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Cricket here is a major-league sport. Not just any old cricket, but tournament-worthy, first-class cricket, has been a staple of St. Vincent life for a quarter of a century. Pavilions seating more than a thousand spectators in cinema-style chairs make viewing matches a pleasure.


Discover the archipelago of The Grenadines on one of the many sailing charters available.

Another major preoccupation is chartering a boat to explore the activities on the Grenadine islands of Mustique, Bequia, and Canouan.

PLAN AHEAD

Should it be Little Cayman or Petit St. Vincent? Tough choice. *The Caribbean Vacation Planner*, a free, 180-page booklet from the Caribbean Coalition for Tourism, can help sort things out. The new fifth edition of the popular publication presents photos, facts, and figures geared toward enabling potential travelers to decide which of thirty-one possible destinations to visit. It also includes pre-addressed, postage-free cards to mail in for even more information. Order a copy of the vacation planner from the Caribbean Tourism Organization by calling toll free, **800-356-9999, ext. 713.**

When you think you've seen it all,

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Set foot on an island so rare and exotic the British and the French fought over it for 150 years. There are quaint fishing villages, deep sea fishing and some of the best diving in the world. Take a hike through our 19,000 acre forest reserve, then soak your feet in the diamond mineral baths built by Louis XIV. See your travel agent or call ***1-800-456-3984*** for your free brochure or visit us at www.st-lucia.com.

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212-874-2035
800-626-5270 (outside N.Y. only)

This store that's practically an institution specializes in comfort footwear for men, women, and children in hard-to-find sizes and widths. More than a hundred famous name brands are carried. For sports, there are performance sandals from Teva, Timberland, and Clarks; traditional athletic footwear from New Balance; and walking and hiking footwear from Mephisto and Ecco. Fashion trendies will find a selection of Birkenstocks, as well as the must-have Dr. Scholl's exercise sandal.

TILLEY ENDURABLES
800-363-8737

This mail-order company promises the best travel and adventure clothing in the world, and you can add sports gear to the boast as well. Throughout the pages of this award-winning catalog, there's a wide selection of clothing for fishing, canoeing, golfing, hiking, and more. The emphasis is on classic good looks with lots of well-thought-out functional detailing such as double-stitch seams with extra reinforcement at stress points, hidden tabs for rolling up shorts or shirtsleeves, fabrics that block out UVA and UVB rays, and velcro-sealed pockets. Where else will you find a bush shirt with antibug gussets in the wristbands? Be sure to look for this season's two smart, new Tilley hats—the Sonora and the Oasis—and you'll have it made in the shade.

TRAVELSMITH
800-950-1600

The only mail-order catalog devoted exclusively to active travelers, carries lightweight clothes that can be crushed in a suitcase or washed in a hotel room sink and still come out looking great. Wardrobe adaptability is also key in vacation planning, and the catalog offers a wide selection of clothes and accessories that can go from hiking all day to dining that evening. Case in point: pants that zip off at the thighs to form shorts, or the nifty "Not Quite Tights," a pair of pants looser than leggings, not as baggy as sweats, lighter than jeans, but as wearable as all three.

CARIBBEAN DIRECTORY

ANSE CHASTANET
Soufrière, St. Lucia, W.I.
800-223-1108

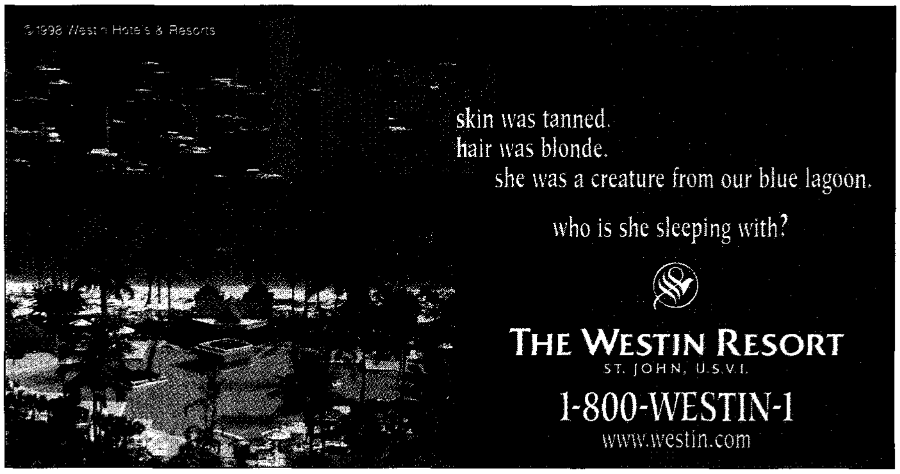
Long known as a mecca for divers and snorkelers, this forty-nine-room hotel that meanders a hundred steps up the side of a hill (navigating them can be an aerobic sport in itself) is developing more land activities. The new "Walk on the Wild Side" and "Mountain Biking" programs offer guided tours through the surrounding six hundred acres of historic plantation ruins and fields planted with cocoa, mango, banana, and guava.

BOLONGO BAY BEACH CLUB & VILLAS
St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.
800-524-4746

Owned by the Doumeng family for twenty-five years, this resort—with its seventy-five beachfront rooms and twenty ocean-view villas spread along crescent-shaped Bolongo Bay—bills itself as "Club Everything." Various packages give total access to Sunfish sailboats, windsurfing, tennis, beach volleyball, scuba diving, a sports bar and, for guests who are good sports, nightly karaoke.

THE BUCCANEER
St. Croix, U.S.V.I.
800-255-3881

It's a pleasure to stay in shape at this 150-room resort, which has a two-mile jogging and nature trail that includes workout stations and signs identifying trees and plants. There's also a revamped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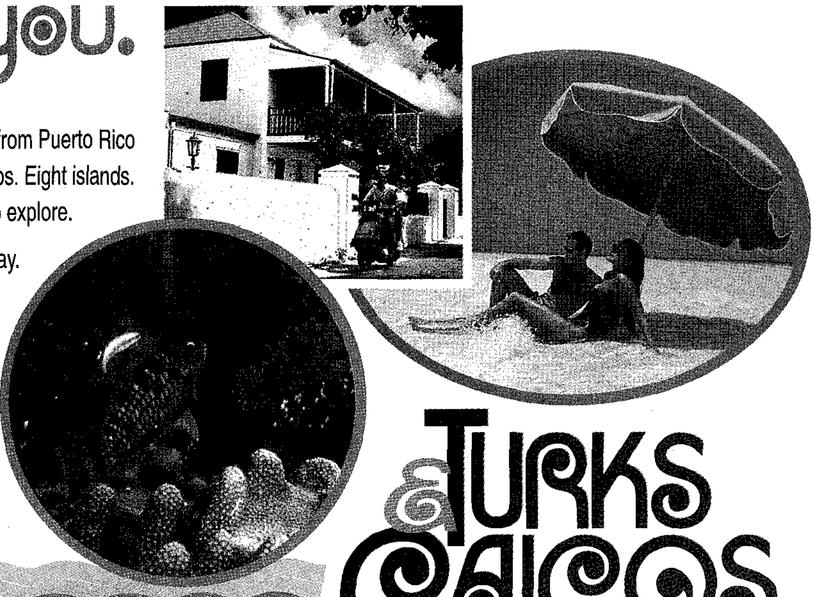

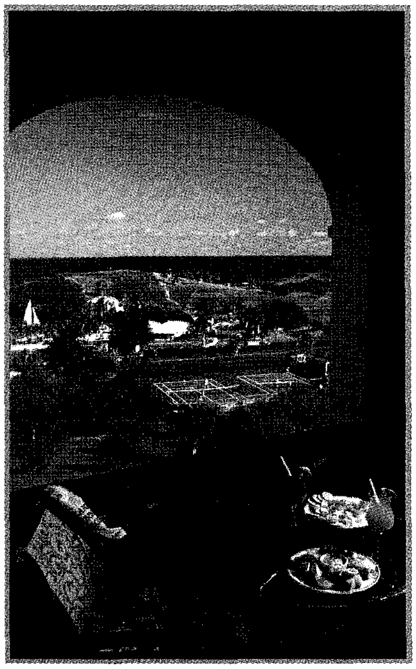

Tiebreaker from the terrace of The Buccaneer.

exercise room, an eighteen-hole seaside golf course, complimentary kayaking and snorkeling, and an eight-court tennis center rated one of the ten best in the Caribbean by *Tennis* magazine.

CLUB PEACE & PLENTY

Exuma, Out Islands Of The Bahamas

800-525-2210

The oldest hotel in the Exumas started out as a bonefishing club for friends of Lawrence Lewis, the grandnephew of railroad tycoon Henry Flagler. Today the graceful, pink hotel has grown to thirty-five rooms, and the Peace & Plenty properties include a beach club with miles of deserted beach and a plethora of water sports, a sixteen-room Beach Inn, and an eight-room Bonefish Lodge, where tradition continues in style.

COCO REEF RESORT

Tobago, W.I.

800-221-1294

Overlooking its own private palm-fringed beach, this 150-room resort offers complimentary kayaks, sailboats, pedaloes (small paddleboats powered by pedals), windsurfing, tennis, a full-service spa with the latest in exercise equipment, and nearby golf. It can also arrange off-the-beaten-path activities such as eco-correct hikes through the rain forest, bird-watching, and seasonal turtle-watching. The three-year-old resort is already shaking things up by adding twenty-five split-level junior suites and a super deluxe Havana suite.

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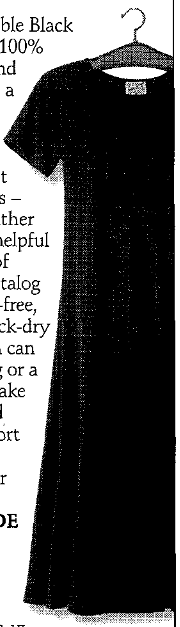
800-438-6493

Travelers who want more for their money favor this resort because a private condominium with a living room, kitchen, and one or two bedrooms can be had for the same price as a hotel room. This nationwide, centralized reservation service offers condominium accommodations in more than thirty resort locations. A popular one with sports enthusiasts is Bermuda's St. George's Club. Three swimming pools, fishing,



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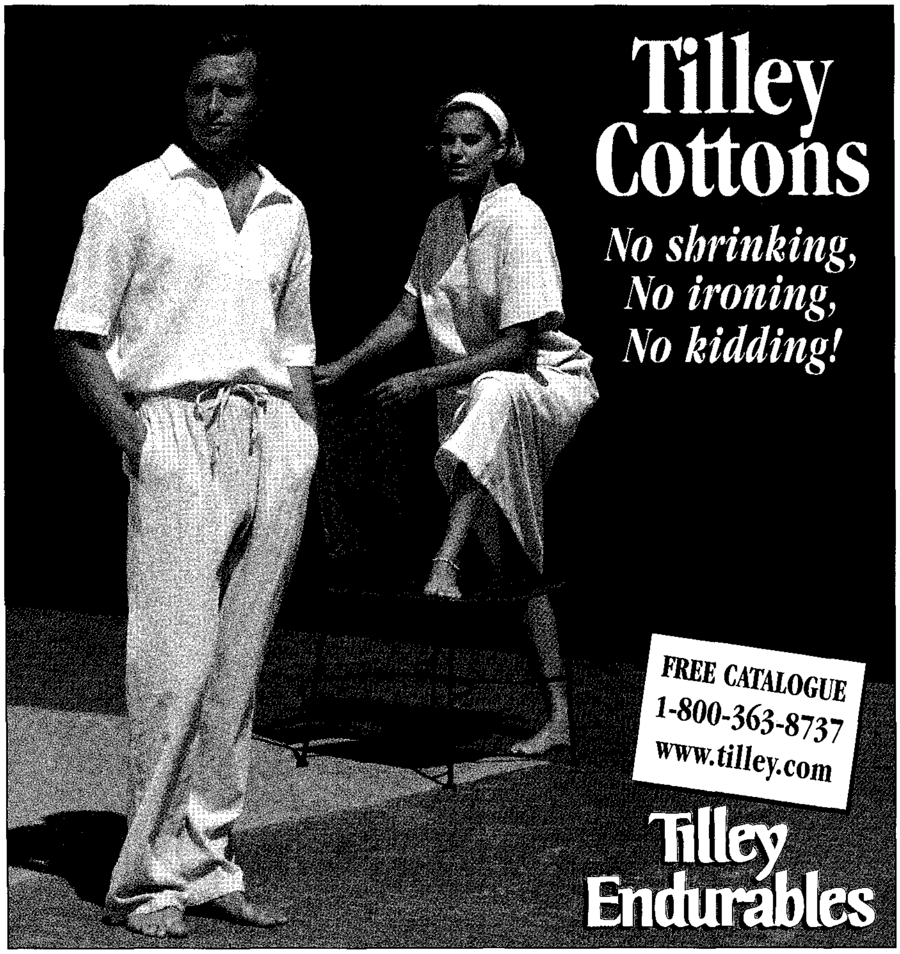

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Montego Bay, Jamaica
800-626-0592

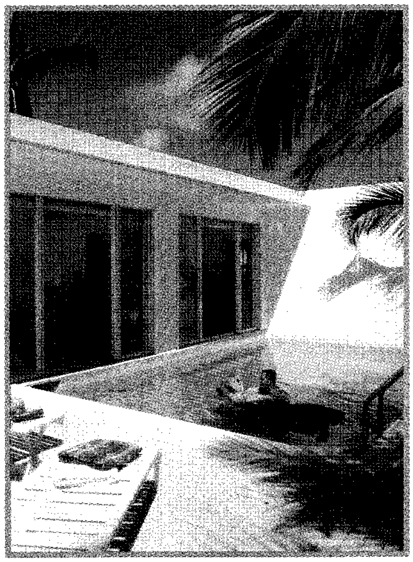
This four-hundred-acre golf, tennis, and beach resort offers all that and more—a jogging trail, squash courts, and a fitness center. For golfers who want to improve their game, a new Leadbetter Golf Plan makes it possible. This 418-room resort features a daily one-hour golf lesson with an instructor certified by David "King of Swing" Leadbetter.

Horseback riding can also be arranged at Montego Bay's Half Moon.

LONG BAY BEACH RESORT & VILLAS

Tortola, BVI
800-729-9599

The mood at this fifty-two-acre resort is so relaxed, a champagne breakfast is served all day long. But it can also be as active as guests want it to be. From April 4th through September 4th, divers can enjoy a "Scuba Dive/Beach Vacation" package. The seven-night plan includes three two-tank daytime dives with a dive master/instructor. It also offers guests a complimentary vehicle for one day to explore what the rest of the island has to offer.



Private swimming at Pavilions & Pools is de rigueur.

PAVILIONS & POOLS HOTEL

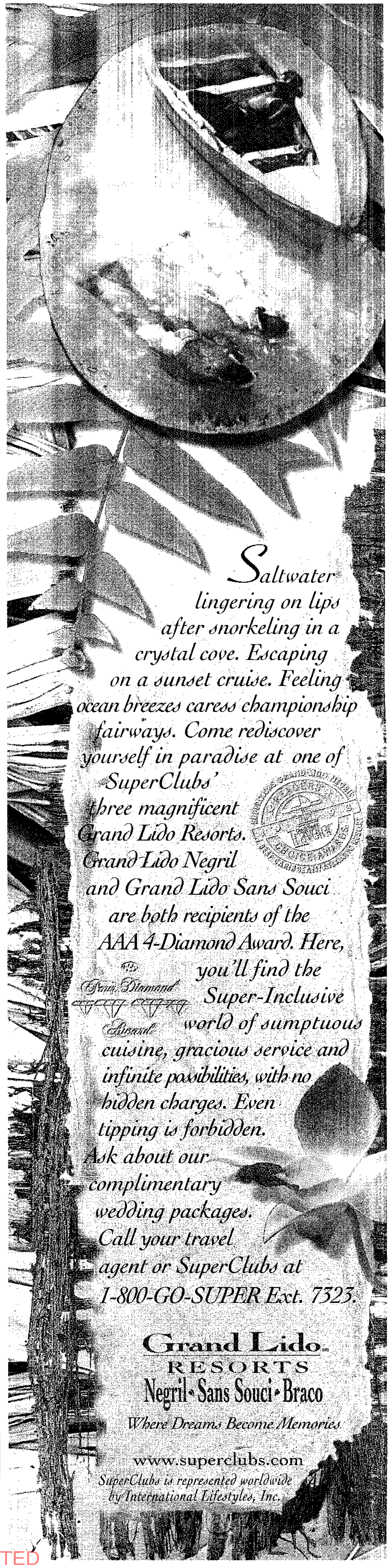
St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.
800-524-2001

This is the only hotel on the island that offers twenty-five one-bedroom villas with private swimming pools. And if swimming doesn't offer enough of a workout, golf, diving, parasailing, and kayak tours through mangroves can all be arranged.

PINK BEACH CLUB & COTTAGES

Tucker's Town, Bermuda
800-355-6161

This ninety-one room, twenty-five-cottage resort got its name from its perch overlooking two of the prettiest pink-coral sand beaches in the hemisphere, but many guests come for the golf. The Pink Beach Club has links with nearby acclaimed courses, including Riddells Bay, the oldest eighteen-hole course on the island. Two masseuses are on hand to work out any postgame kinks with a sports massage in your room. The resort is offering a special Mother's Day promotion May 3rd through 17th, which includes what every mom relishes—breakfast in bed.



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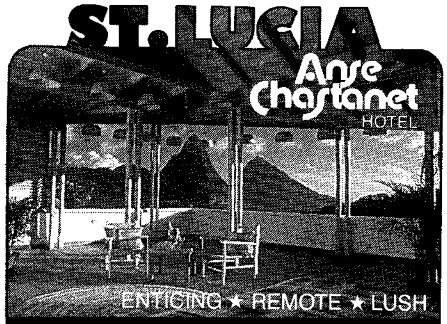

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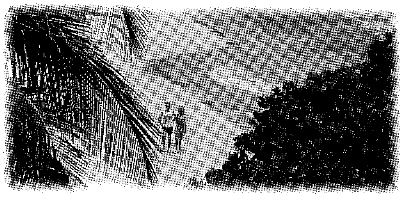
Tortola, British Virgin Islands



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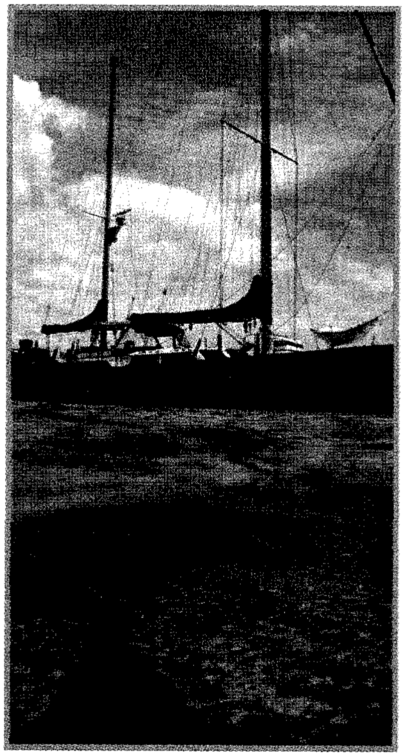

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SETTLERS' BEACH VILLA HOTEL

Holetown, St. James, Barbados

246-422-3052

The whole point at this small, calm, tropical enclave is to "settle" into one of the twenty-two bedroom villas, each complete with its own kitchen, and not have to move unless you feel like it. With a silvery stretch of beach on the Platinum Coast and a freshwater swimming pool with a swim

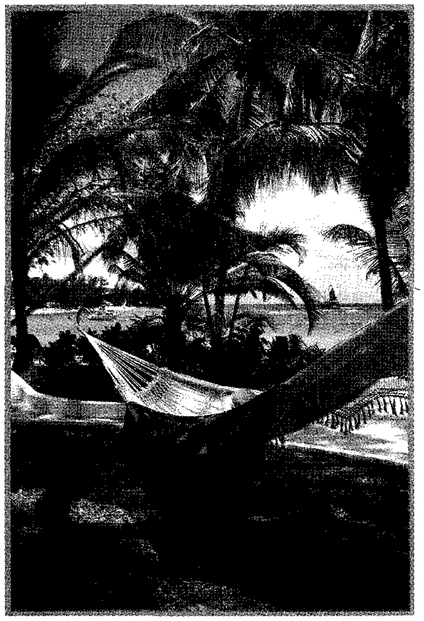
GTP, Miami 1998

Take the Bermudian plunge in the Stonington Beach Hotel's temperature-controlled freshwater pool.

instructor on hand, it won't be long before you do.

SONESTA BEACH RESORT & VILLAS
Anguilla
800-SONESTA

This ninety-two room Moroccan fantasy, with its mosaics, fountains, and arches dazzling the eye at every turn, boasts one of the best fitness centers on the island. But with its advantageous setting on a broad crescent of silky sand and crystal sea, you can also stay in shape with sailboarding, water biking, kayaking, windsurfing, or swimming laps in the freshwater pool.



Palm-dotted Settlers' Beach: A tropical home away from home.

STONINGTON BEACH HOTEL
Bermuda
800-447-7462

Celebrated pink-sand Elbow Beach is spread below a sixty-seven room hotel owned and operated by Bermuda College's Hospitality & Culinary Institute. Unparalleled service is a hallmark, and the hotel has just added custom-designed walking excursions. One option is a hike along the Bermuda Railway Trail, which stretches across the entire island and offers glimpses of turquoise water, lush gardens, and typical Bermudian architecture.

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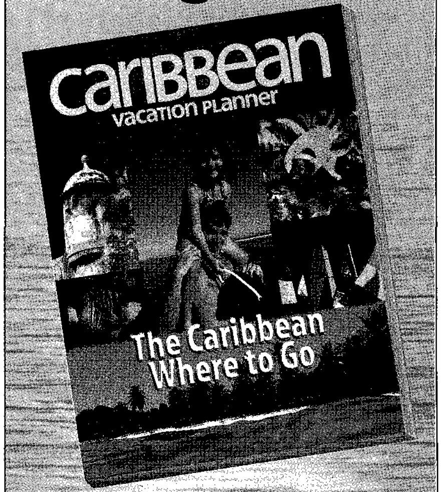

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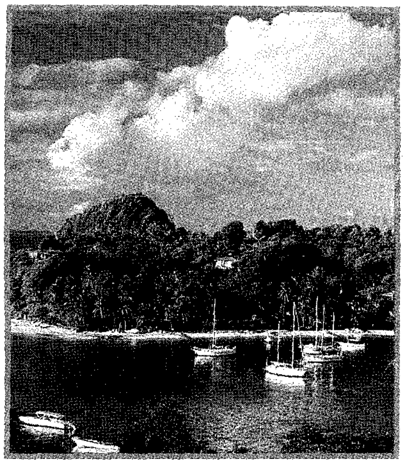

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(Kathleen Beckett is a writer whose travel articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Travel Holiday*, and *In Style*.)

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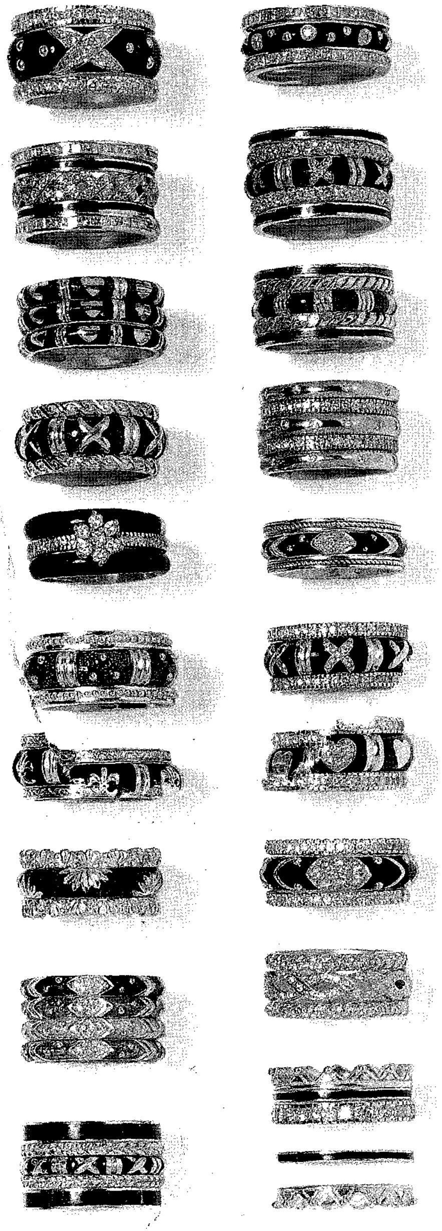

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ANNALS OF JOURNALISM

THE FAMILY

How being Jewish shaped the dynasty that runs the Times.

BY SUSAN E. TIFFT AND ALEX S. JONES

THIS PAGE: AP/WIDE WORLD; OPPOSITE: COURTESY THE NEW YORK TIMES ARCHIVE

For members of the Sulzberger family, there are few sins more grave than ostentatious displays of wealth or self-congratulation. Yet on one balmy evening in late June of 1996 they momentarily shed their customary reserve and threw an opulent party at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of their ownership of the New York *Times*. The guest list was a reflection of the family's high-powered world of society figures, writers, politicians, television stars, business leaders, advertisers, and executives, editors, and columnists at the paper—all of whom queued up to shake hands with Arthur Ochs (Punch) Sulzberger, chairman of the New York Times Company, and his sisters Marian, Ruth, and Judy. Mingling elsewhere in the Great Hall were the thirteen Sulzberger cousins who make up the family's fourth generation of owners, including Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., who four years earlier had succeeded his father as publisher.

In a visual effect out of a Busby Berkeley musical, a hundred tuxedoed violinists—one for each year of the family's ownership—stood on the grand staircase playing Cole Porter and Jerome Kern. At either end of the Great Hall, the round, solemn face of a young Adolph Ochs, the family patriarch, stared down from enormous banners fluttering from the balconies. It was Ochs who, in the summer of 1896, had acquired a bankrupt newspaper known then as the New-York *Times* and gradually transformed it into the enduring tribunal of news and opinion that we know today. In the process, Ochs also created an extended clan that has, arguably, been the most influential dynasty in twentieth-century America. "The family," as its members refer to themselves, not only has owned the *Times* but has actively published it for nearly half the nation's history.

During dinner, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and Governor George Pataki offered toasts; and a brief play—an imaginary dialogue between Adolph Ochs and his wife, Effie—was performed by two actors who had been cast not at all according to type: Sam Waterston and Kate Nelligan.

Meanwhile, forty blocks south at the New York Public Library, the centennial was being marked more somberly. In an exhibition that had been organized to show how the *Times* has covered the great events of the century, there was a rare confession of failure. "The New

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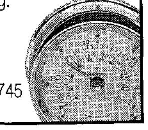

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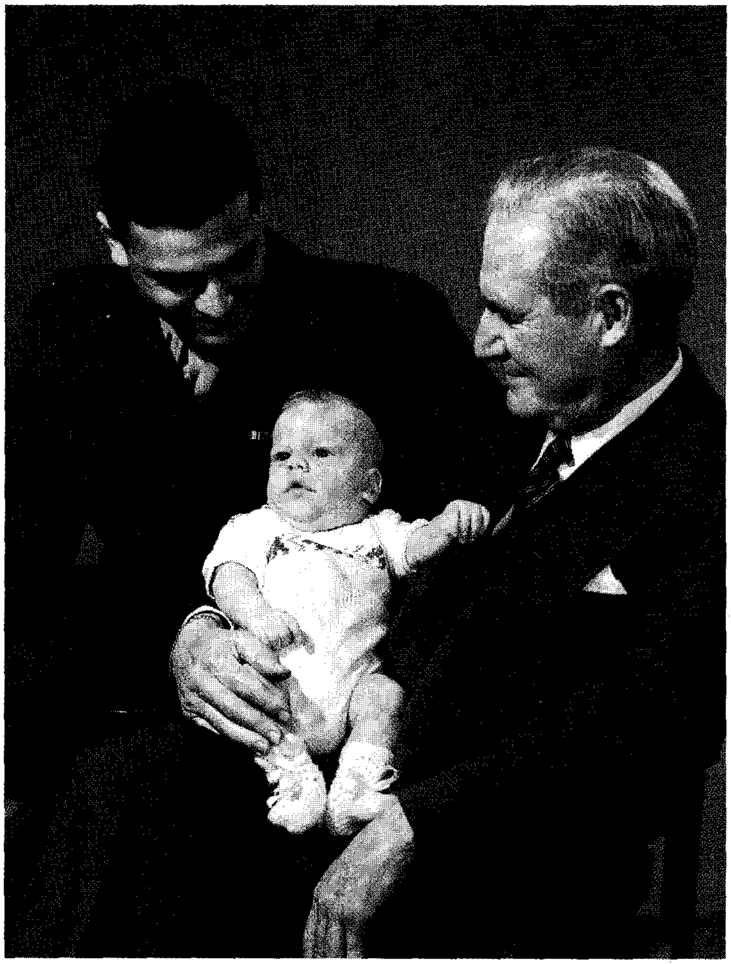
York *Times* has been criticized for grossly underplaying coverage of the Holocaust," read a caption next to an assortment of newsclips from the Second World War. "Although some reports were given prominence, this display shows that the criticism was valid."

It was an admission that went directly to the heart of the institution's ethos, its history, and, above all, its anxieties. For, although the *Times* has been a public company since 1969, it is still controlled by a family whose experiences as Jews—rejection, fear, confusion, accommodation, and triumph—continue to shape the paper we read today. Ari Goldman, a former religion reporter for the paper, might assert, as he did in an article in the *Jewish Week*, that "reading the *Times* has become part of being Jewish in America," but the Sulzbergers would undoubtedly recoil at such a suggestion. Like so many assimilationist German Jews, they have struggled to be viewed as Americans of Jewish faith, nothing more, and to have their newspaper judged as an objective arbiter of information—the paper of record. But, as the *Times*' muted coverage of the Holocaust demonstrates, it was never that simple.


Arthur Hays Sulzberger, with his son Arthur Ochs (Punch) and grandson Arthur, Jr., in 1952; opposite (center), outside Hitler's bunker, in 1946.

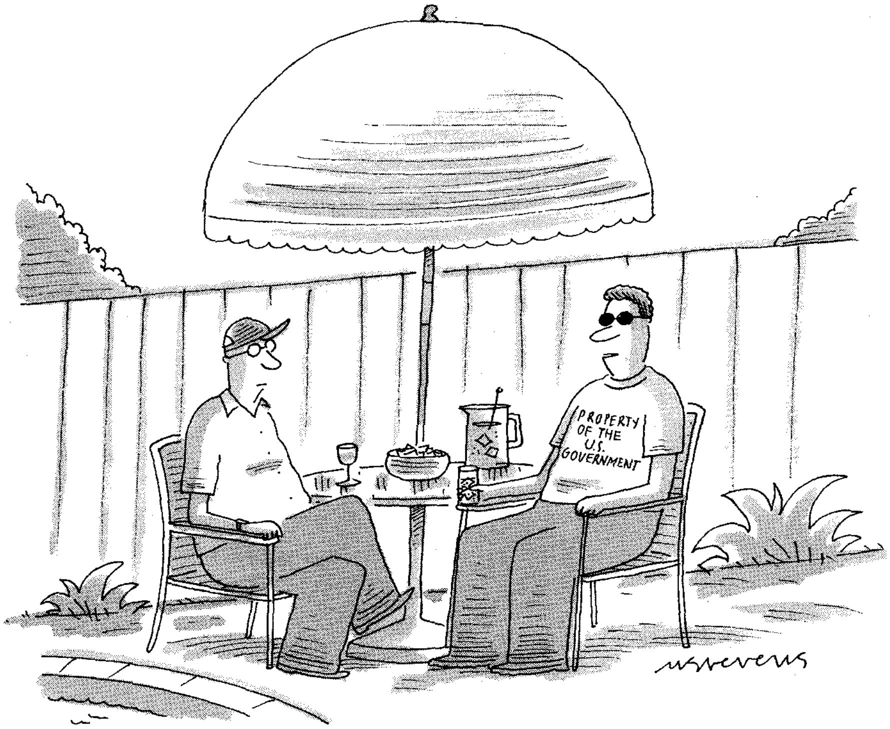
IN the seven years that we have spent researching a biography of the Ochses and the Sulzbergers, it has become increasingly apparent that the family's self-image as Jews has profoundly shaped the paper. Their identity is that of the relatively well-educated, cultured German Jewish immigrants who came to this country in the middle of the nineteenth century and who sought to prove, through their energy, industry, and rectitude, that they could prevail in an America that was overwhelmingly Gentile. They shed the habits and customs of their Old World religion, embracing a Reform Judaism that largely replaced Hebrew with English in synagogues, and they often looked with embarrassment at the later-arriving Jews from Eastern Europe, who retained vivid evidence of their Jewishness—their *Yiddishkayt.*

In interviews with family members, editors, and reporters, in archival documents, and in a selective reading of a century's worth of the *Times*, we found that the qualities that enabled so many German Jews to rise to positions of respectability and prominence—pride, caution, ambition, and energetic patriotism—were, in good part, responsible for making the *Times* into the singular forum of the establishment that it is today.

At the same time, we discovered that the values that molded the *Times* have also made the paper—and, by extension, the family—a frequent target of criticism by Jewish readers who feel that the paper has not adequately stood up for Jews, on issues ranging from the championing of Israel to the denunciation of the black youths whose murder of a young Orthodox Jewish man set off the 1991 riots in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Even today, the debate about whether the *Times* is either "too Jewish" or "not Jewish enough" continues—with a good deal of the talk prompted by questions about the "Jewishness" of the paper's deeply circumspect proprietors.

SUCH questions would have dismayed Ochs's father, Julius, whose own father, Lazarus Ochsenhorn, was a prosperous diamond merchant and Talmudic scholar in Bavaria. Julius emigrated to America in 1845 to escape the oppressive laws that restricted Jewish marriages and professions. Using the shorthand name of Ochs, he became an itinerant peddler and occasional teacher, following the path of many German Jewish immigrants of the time. He had a scholarly bent and was fluent in Hebrew, and after he settled in Knoxville, Tennessee, with his wife and six children, his fellow-Jews called on him to perform the functions of a lay rabbi. Because his attempts at business repeatedly failed, his oldest son, Adolph, who was born in 1858, was forced to become the family breadwinner. As a teen-ager, Adolph worked his way up from paperboy to journeyman printer at the Knoxville *Chronicle* and the Knoxville *Tribune*. Knoxville had harbored a large pro-Union population during the Civil War, and anti-Jewish feelings persisted, because of rumors that Jewish bankers had financed the Confederacy. As the son of a poor Jew with a distinct German accent, Adolph learned to keep a low profile, work harder than others, and seek harmony whenever possible. Eventually, he moved to Chattanooga, where, at the age of twenty, he managed to buy the near-moribund Chattanooga *Times*, a paper with a circulation of just two hundred and fifty. In a matter of years, he built it into a going concern in a striving, polyglot town, where energy and gumption mattered far more than one's religion.

When Ochs married Iphigenia (Effie) Miriam Wise in 1883, he joined one of the most celebrated Jewish families in America. Effie's father, Rabbi Isaac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"It's part of a deal I worked out with the I.R.S."

Mayer Wise, of Cincinnati, had been instrumental in the formation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and of Hebrew Union College, and he was generally considered the founder of Reform Judaism in America. An émigré from Bohemia, he scandalized many of his American "co-religionists" by discontinuing various Orthodox traditions, such as the covering of the head and the separation of the sexes in synagogue.

In 1896, Ochs used the Wise connection to his advantage during negotiations to acquire the failing New-York *Times*. A key element of his strategy was to persuade owners of worthless *Times* shares to exchange their old stock for shares in a new entity he had formed, the New York Times Company. Before approaching the influential banker and shareholder Jacob Schiff, he entreated his Wise relatives to write the financier on his behalf, and they did so. Schiff, like other prominent New York Jews, wanted Ochs to buy the *Times*, because he believed, as he told the lawyer Leopold Wallach, that Ochs "could be of great service to the Jews generally." Much later, Ochs maintained that "no Jew, except myself . . . played any part in my acquiring the ownership of the *Times*." The fact is, however, that the support of such powerful Jewish businessmen as Schiff and Isidor Straus, the co-owner of Macy's, was critical to Ochs's success.

IN Chattanooga, being Jewish had mattered little; in New York, it was a defining distinction. "I have met more Jews in the past two months than I ever knew in my life," Ochs told Effie, after acquiring the *Times*. In New York, he followed the advice he had once given the congregants of Chattanooga's only synagogue: "We should live quietly, happily, unostentatiously," he said, and added, "Don't be too smart. Don't know too much." With his wife and daughter, Iphigene, he lived in a series of boarding houses and rented apartments on the Upper West Side. As was not uncommon among Reform Jews, he celebrated Christmas with a decorated tree, and never held a Passover seder—though he once offered his studious nephew John Oakes a guaranteed income of ten thousand dollars a year if he would agree to become a rabbi. (Oakes refused.) Clubs that were unfriendly to Jews or accepted only a token number disturbed him, but not enough to prevent him from joining several of those which served his business purposes, such as the Lawyers' Club and the Hardware Club.

In an effort to win the high opinion of the powerful—most of whom were Gentiles—Ochs made his newspaper into a living demonstration that Jews could be outstanding citizens: hardworking, trustworthy, honorable. (He coined the slogan "All the News That's Fit to Print" to underscore the paper's probity.) Ochs stayed out of the public spotlight, ceding the banquet circuit to his diminutive (four feet seven) business manager, Louis Wiley, and leaving the paper's news pronouncements to his brilliant managing editor, Carr Van Anda. In this way, he won a considerable measure of respect while creating a comfortable wall between himself and the vaguely frightening, better-educated, more socially adept Gentile establishment.

Despite Ochs's efforts, he became a target of anti-Semitism. In 1904, on the day before the city passed an ordinance changing the name of Longacre Square to Times Square, William Randolph Hearst revived long-standing rumors that the Jewish banker August Belmont and other Wall Street tycoons controlled the *Times*. The attack, which was signed by Hearst himself and was published in his morning New York *American* and his evening New York *Journal*, described Ochs as an "oily little commercial gentleman with . . . obsequiously curved shoulders," who took orders from Belmont and passed them along to his editor. Ochs was so rattled by this Shylock-like portrait of himself that his paper's story about the birth of Times Square, which normally would have been highlighted on the front page, ran inconspicuously on page 2.

IT was a sign of how cautious Ochs was in his management of the *Times* that he forbade the paper to mount crusades of any kind—with one exception. That came in 1914, when Louis Marshall, a prominent lawyer and the president of the American Jewish Committee, asked him to help rally support for Leo Frank, the Jewish manager of the National Pencil Company, in Atlanta. Frank, who had grown up in Brooklyn, had been found guilty of the murder of a thirteen-year-old worker in his factory, Mary Phagan, whose battered and sexually violated body was discovered in the plant's basement. The Frank trial rallied Southern resentment of Northern capitalists and exposed ugly veins of anti-

Semitism. Mobs outside the Atlanta courthouse chanted "Death to the Jew!" The populist *Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine* in Georgia demanded the swift execution of the "filthy, perverted Jew of New York." Throughout the country, Jewish leaders organized themselves to fight a verdict that they thought had been unfair and a climate of bigotry that they feared might spread.

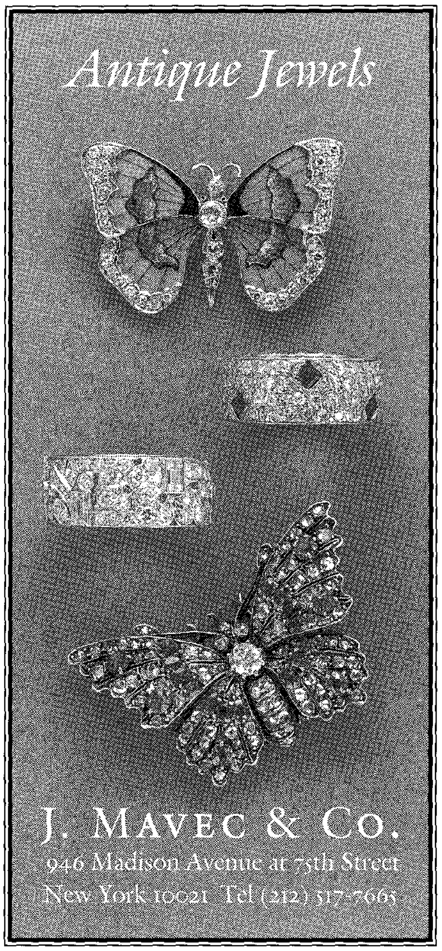
Initially, Ochs was not convinced of Frank's innocence, but after Marshall persuaded him that a "horrible miscarriage of justice" had been committed, he lobbied his journalistic colleagues to editorialize in favor of Frank, and he published story after story about the case. What prompted Ochs to take such a public stand was his sentimental belief that in America an innocent man could not be hanged; a regional loyalty also made him eager to prove that his fellow-Southerners were not anti-Semites, contrary to the belief of many Northerners. He was further emboldened by the perceived security of his position: after eighteen years under his leadership, the *Times'* journalistic preëminence was unassailable, and Ochs, at the age of fifty-six, had become a near-iconic figure in the American press. For months, the paper decried Frank's trial as a "veritable thicket of perjuries" and endorsed an appeal effort that went all the way to the United States Supreme Court. When the appeal was denied, and Frank's execution was set, for June, 1915, the *Times* campaigned to persuade Georgia's governor, John Slaton, to commute Frank's sentence to life imprisonment. Five days before leaving office, in a move that ruined his political career, Slaton did just that. Two months later, a mob dragged Frank from the State Prison Farm at Milledgeville, Georgia, drove him to a field about a hundred miles away, and hanged him.

Although Ochs was devastated by the lynching, he continued to cling to his belief that "race hatred" had played no part in it. The *Times* immediately dispatched one of its best reporters, Charles Willis Thompson, to Georgia to investigate. His stories, which Ochs reluctantly published, left no doubt that anti-Semitism had been a decisive factor in Frank's death, and that most Georgians approved of it. One detail particularly shocked Ochs: Thompson wrote that Robert E. Lee Howell, a cousin of Clark Howell, editor of the Atlanta *Constitution* and a close friend of Ochs, had viciously stamped on the face of the corpse. Hate mail began to arrive at the *Times*, most of it addressed personally to Ochs, who felt sufficiently threatened to post a guard outside his office. In February, 1916, he confessed to a young *Times* writer that he "had been for some time in a state of depression."

Never again did Ochs allow the *Times* to crusade for a cause, and any issue involving Jews was handled with a wariness that bordered on paranoia. When Russia refused to honor the passports of American citizens who were Jews, the New York *Times* did not protest. News stories about the refusal omitted the word "Jew"; editorials blandly stated that tsarist Russia, where anti-Semitism was rampant, should not discriminate against Americans of any race, origin, or religion. The sanitized coverage so infuriated Jacob Schiff that, in 1916, he accused Ochs of actively "strengthening the hands of [your brethren's] unmerciful oppressors."

OCHS'S anxieties were heightened in the waning days of the First World War, shortly after the *Times* had won the first Pulitzer Prize for Disinterested and Meritorious Public Service for its publication of official documents relating to the war. This time, the flashpoint was an editorial endorsing Austria's offer of a tentative, non-binding discussion of peace terms. To modern eyes, the editorial hardly seems incendiary, but at the time the desire for Germany's unconditional surrender was so strong that many readers regarded the *Times'* position as bordering on treason. Thousands of letters and telegrams denounced both the newspaper and Ochs for "running up the white flag." Taking advantage of the situation, the New York *Herald* launched a circulation drive with the pointed slogan "Read an American Newspaper."

The controversy left Ochs so shaken that he considered retiring from active involvement in the *Times* and transferring management to a trustee. A subsequent breakdown, which had been building since the Frank lynching, caused him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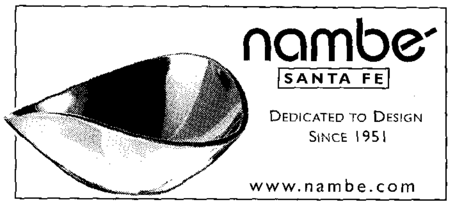
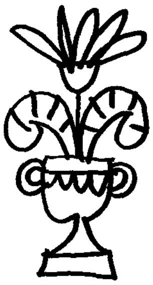


to be put under the care of a neurologist, who noted that his patient followed a cycle of elation and despondency—the classic symptoms of bipolar disorder. For the better part of a year Ochs was too ill to come into the office. But the *Times*' board of directors, which included his daughter, Iphigene, refused to appoint a temporary replacement. Instead, the *Times* sailed on like the Flying Dutchman, with no skipper at her helm.

When Ochs emerged from his melancholy in the spring of 1920, he was more reluctant than ever to challenge the status quo—a conservatism that resulted in relatively weak coverage by the *Times* of the Sacco-Vanzetti case and the Scopes Monkey Trial, and turned the paper into an apologist for the Harding Administration during the Teapot Dome scandal. The proprietor of the *Nation*, Oswald Garrison Villard, gibed that the secret of Ochs's success was "his unending devotion to the God of things as they are."



During Hitler's rise to power, Ochs refused to believe that the cultivated society of his forebears could be seduced by Hitler's corrupting charisma. But after Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, in 1933, Ochs began to recognize the grim realities of the Third Reich. With considerable anguish, he made an unprecedented decision: he banned all letters to the editor concerning Hitler. To demonstrate a lack of bias and to court subscribers, the *Times*' editorial page had always been an open forum for readers' views on every side of every issue. If Ochs were to continue that policy, he would be honor-bound to publish letters in support of Hitler, however anti-Semitic—and that he could not bear. The *Times* lamely explained to those who inquired that it had received so many letters on "the German situation" that it would be unfair to publish some and not others, but nonetheless letters continued to pour in—many from Jews who were furious at being denied an outlet for their fears about the Third Reich.

By the summer of 1933, Ochs's agitation about Hitler had ripened into another depression. For the rest of that year, he sequestered himself at Hillandale, his thirty-two-room estate in White Plains. He only occasionally read the paper and rarely appeared in public. By the time he died, on April 8, 1935, his forty-three-year-old son-in-law, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, had been acting as the effective publisher for two years. A formal vote of the three trustees of the Ochs Trust, an entity that Ochs had established in his will to serve as the controlling owner of the *Times*, made the title official.

In the hierarchy of American Jewish society, Arthur Sulzberger's family occupied a tier above that of the Ochses. Although his Sulzberger antecedents were Ashkenazic—German Jewish immigrants from the Bavarian Palatinate—his mother, Rachel Peixotto Hays, was a descendant of Sephardic Jews who had come to America before the Revolution. Arthur inherited his mother's fierce ancestral pride. After discovering in early boyhood that another Arthur Sulzberger lived in New York—a member of a meatpacking clan—he insisted on always being identified as Arthur Hays Sulzberger. He also joined the Sons of the American Revolution, and later insisted that his son, Punch, join as well.

Arthur's father, Cyrus, had been an organizer of the Industrial Removal Office, which sought to relieve the congestion of Jewish immigrants in New York at the turn of the century by relocating them to other parts of the country. After the bloody massacres of Jews at Kishinev in 1903, Cyrus embraced Zionism, and for a time served as the vice-president of the American Zionist Federation. He took young Arthur to Zionist congresses, and there the boy met Dr. Theodor Herzl, Max Nordau, and other leaders of the movement for a Jewish homeland. After the First World War, however, Cyrus abruptly renounced the movement, saying that Jews should focus on uniting people rather than separating them. It was an argument that greatly influenced his son.

Unlike his wife, Iphigene Ochs, whose Jewish education had come largely at the hands of a well-intentioned Irish Catholic governess, Arthur received formal religious instruction from a rabbi and was bar mitzvahed. A young man of dashing good looks, he had been rejected by the undergraduate fraternities at Columbia because of his background. Afterward, he refused to join other Jews in founding a chapter of Zeta Beta Tau, the Jewish fraternity, saying that he wanted no part of "ghetto living or thinking or acting." In the late thirties, to satisfy Iphigene, he applied for membership in the Century Association, a predominantly Gentile club that Adolph Ochs had longed to join but had never approached for fear of rejection. By then, the Century's atmosphere had relaxed somewhat and Sulzberger was accepted, but, in what amounted to a political act, he almost never attended.

Once, before he became publisher, Sulzberger was humiliated in front of his family by a Cape Cod hotel clerk who refused to honor a room reservation because Sulzberger was Jewish. The experience caused him later to strike an uncomfortable compromise that made him party to the anti-Semitism he despised. At his direction, the *Times* published ads for businesses which included words like "restricted" and "selected clientele." Sulzberger's rationale was that Jews should be forewarned of bias, so they could avoid the sort of embarrassment he had suffered. He didn't halt the practice until 1943, and he did so then only because the District Attorney for New York County informed him that it was illegal.

Like his father-in-law, Sulzberger was skittish about showcasing Jewish talent in the paper. Jewish reporters were convinced that they got out-of-town assignments less frequently than their Gentile counterparts because such stories were more likely to merit bylines. And when Jewish bylines were given they were deracinated; "Abraham H. Raskin" became "A. H. Raskin," for instance. In 1938, when Sulzberger made his friend Charles Merz the editor of the editorial page, the paper's Washington bureau chief, Arthur Krock, had cause to suspect that he had been passed over in part because he had a Jewish surname. The more salient reason, however, was that Krock's conservative views were not in tune with Arthur's liberal ones, especially on racial issues. Nevertheless, Krock asked his ally and patron Joseph P. Kennedy, who was then the Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, to take up the matter with Sulzberger. Kennedy did so, and reported back that the publisher felt that "he would be criticized if he appointed a Jew as Editor, since the ownership was in the hands of Jews."

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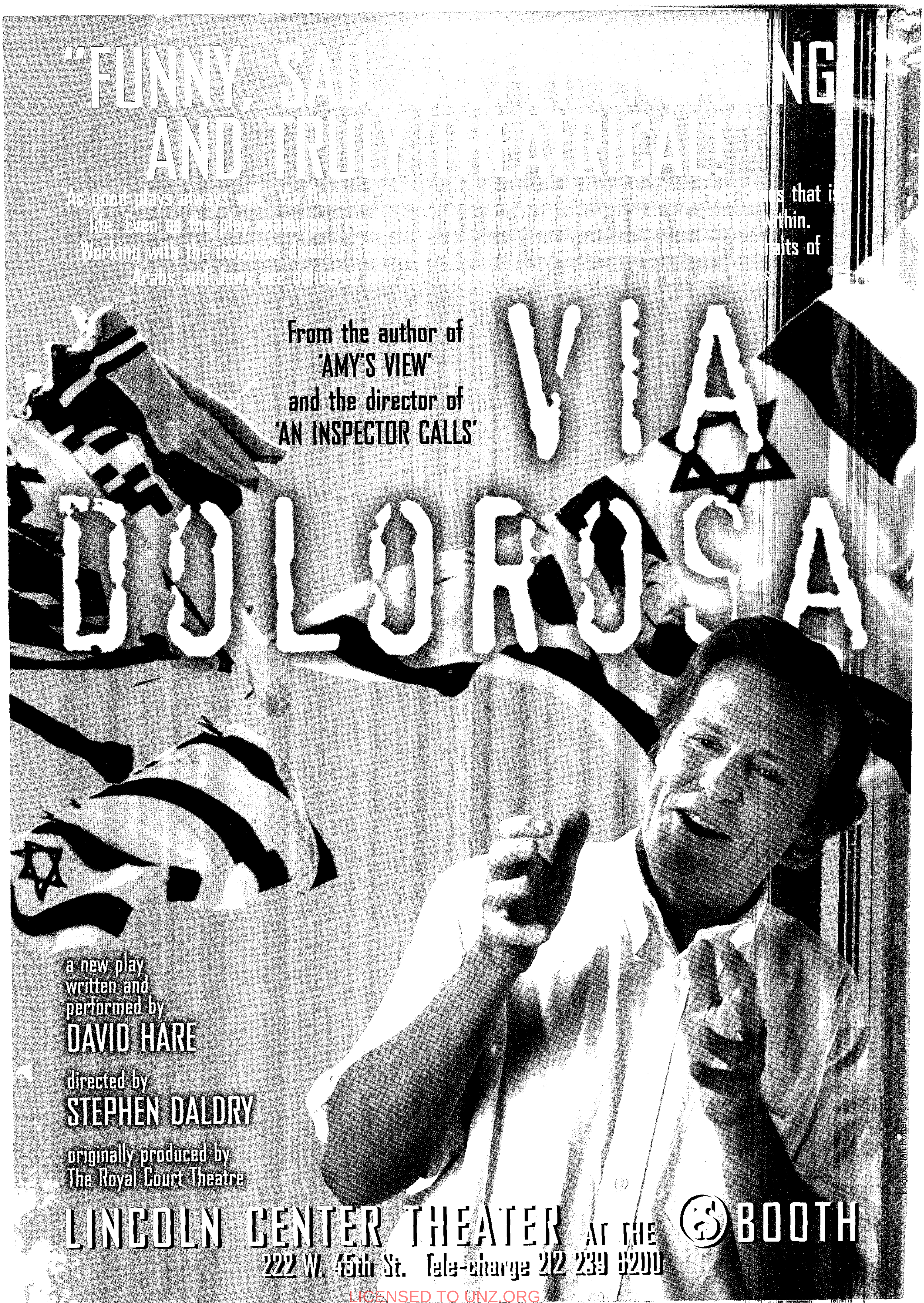

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Because Sulzberger rejected the idea that Jews were members of a "race," he was vehemently opposed to the use of collective phrases such as "the Jewish people"; instead, he instructed editors to use "people of the Jewish faith," or simply "Jews"—expressions that he felt subtly conveyed the notion that being Jewish was something one could freely choose, like being a Methodist or a Presbyterian. His daughter Judy told us, "Deep down, my father probably would just as soon not have been Jewish."

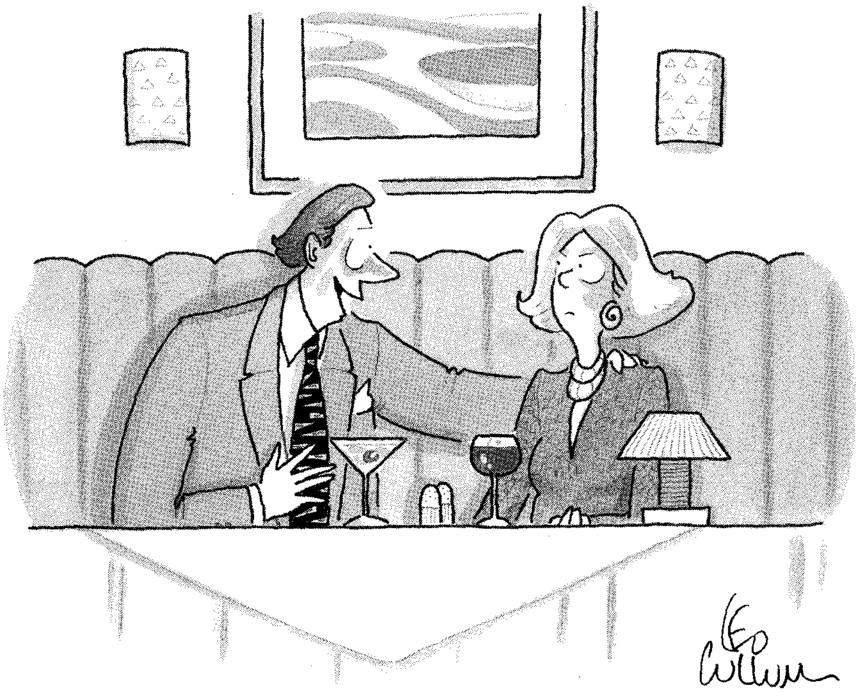
The challenge of covering Hitler and the Holocaust exposed all Sulzberger's conflicted feelings. While he courageously insisted—in the face of isolationist, and often anti-Semitic, opposition—on the *Times'* campaign to prepare the United States for entry into the Second World War, he didn't want to diminish the paper's credibility by encouraging the view that it was in any way "Jewish." Over all, the *Times'* coverage of the Hitler years was remarkably thorough, and the paper often raised its voice forcefully in editorials. Nonetheless, as the Holocaust scholar Deborah E. Lipstadt demonstrated in "Beyond Belief," her 1986 book about press coverage of the Final Solution, the *Times* frequently buried important news stories instead of putting them on page 1. For example, a dispatch dated July 2, 1944, which cited "authoritative information" that four hundred thousand Hungarian Jews had been deported to their deaths and that an additional three hundred and fifty thousand were to be killed in the next several weeks, received only four column inches on page 12; the same issue carried on the front page an account of Fourth of July holiday crowds.

The *Times* wasn't the only major newspaper to downplay reports of Hitler's death camps in the early forties. In keeping with mainstream opinion at the time, papers such as the New York *Herald Tribune*, the Washington *Post*, and the Los Angeles *Times* either refused to believe reports of Jewish genocide in Europe or took the view that the reports were exaggerated in order to attract relief funds. But the *Times* was unique: as the most respected newspaper in the country, with superior capacity for foreign reporting, it set the agenda for other journals, many of which took their cues from the *Times'* front page. Had the *Times* featured reports of Nazi atrocities against Jews more prominently, the nation might have awakened to the horror far earlier than it did.

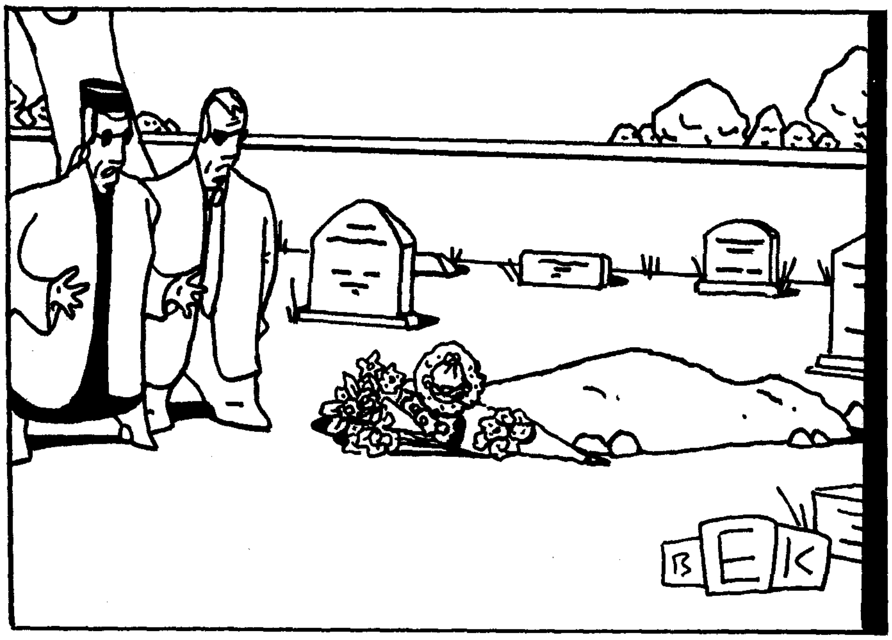
On its opinion page, the *Times* focussed consistently on all victims of Nazi aggression, with only occasional references to Jews as a group. Editorials concerning the Warsaw resistance and the subsequent ghetto uprising, for instance, made oblique references only to "the Poles" and "Warsaw patriots." An internal survey of *Times* editorials on "minorities" from 1931 to 1943, which Sulzberger himself commissioned, did reveal that in three hundred and forty-five editorials "Jews in Germany & German-occupied Countries" were the minority most written about, with the exception of American blacks. However, only eleven editorials about this group appeared in 1938, the year that Hitler's Aryanization campaign was fully realized, and only three editorials appeared in each of the years 1941, 1942, and 1943, by which point Hitler's extermination plan was inescapably apparent.

LIKE his father, Sulzberger became a strong opponent of Zionism. In 1942, a New York conference of Zionists called for a Jewish military force under the Star of David and for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine; a *Times* editorial pronounced the idea "unwise." In a speech before the Brotherhood of the Madison Avenue Temple, in Baltimore, Sulzberger said, "If I, as a Jew, can help to impress the world that what Jews want far more than a home of their own is the right to call any place home . . . then I believe I shall have been faithful to the tradition of justice which is my heritage as an American of Jewish faith." As an alternative to a Jewish Palestine, he suggested the postwar creation of a "great state" carved out of several nations in the Holy Land—one that would "welcome all who wish to come," Jews and non-Jews alike. The *Jewish Record* responded by calling Sulzberger a "Jewish Bourbon" and a "self-hating Jew." The chairman of the American Zionist Emergency Council, Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, charged the *Times* with not reporting Zionist news impartially, "as befits a responsible newspaper."

The moment marked a turning point for Sulzberger. In a sharply worded letter to Rabbi Silver, he said that the "Zionist barrage of misrepresentation" had converted him from a "non-Zionist" to an "anti-Zionist," because entrusting statehood to a group that "willfully perverts and distorts facts" and "seeks to destroy the character of individuals who differ with it" would be "fundamentally bad judgment." His next comment was calculated to inflame: "I am opposed to



"This isn't about you, Cheryl. In this crazy world your problems don't amount to a hill of beans. This is about me."



"Why would He take someone so toned?"

• •

Goebbels' tactics whether or not they are confined to Nazi Germany." But behind his defiant words Sulzberger was badly shaken by the incident. To keep him alert to Zionism and Jewish issues, he hired the head of the Jewish Information Bureau, Bernard Richards, to summarize what the Jewish press was saying about the *Times* and to answer any questions about the paper's coverage of Jewish issues.

Just as the *Times* was reluctant to give prominence to the Holocaust in its news pages, the Sulzbergers were reticent about it at home. Asked if their parents had done anything to aid Holocaust victims, Punch Sulzberger and his sisters said that they didn't know. But our research revealed that, in the thirties and early forties, the senior Sulzbergers had quietly sponsored the emigration of at least twenty-five Ochs and Sulzberger relatives from Germany and rescued several other individuals in Europe. Despite these accomplishments, Iphigene later expressed regret over her behavior during the Hitler years. "I didn't do all I should have during these Nazi atrocities," she wrote her son, in 1964. She was not a woman given to emotional displays, but, as one of her grandchildren observed years later, that subject brought her to tears.

After the war, Iphigene's views on Zionism diverged sharply from her husband's. For her, she told an interviewer in 1973, the systematic murder of six million Jews made a separate state of Israel "comprehensible—and necessary." To the *Times* columnist James Reston, she wrote, "I am afraid the world regards the Jews just as the pioneers did the American Indian: The only good one is a dead one."

In the spring of 1945, just before Germany's surrender, Julius Ochs Adler, Iphigene's cousin and the *Times*' general manager, inspected Dachau and Buchenwald as part of a press delegation assembled by General Eisenhower. "I know you all want to know about it and I'll tell you," Adler informed the family when he returned. "But I don't ever want to talk about it again. I want to try and forget." Such experiences had no effect on the *Times*' coverage of Nazi barbarism. A front-page story on the liberation of Dachau did not include the word "Jew," and an article about Russian estimates of the death toll at Auschwitz, written by Arthur's nephew C. L. Sulzberger, appeared on page 12 and made no mention of the fact that most of the victims were Jews.

In 1946, Arthur himself visited Dachau, and also sat in on the Nuremberg trials. The tour included glimpses of ovens, open graves, and even several unburned and unburied bodies, yet the experience did not seem to touch him as it had touched Julius. He returned home unshaken in his opposition to Israel as a separate state—a position, he freely admitted, that was fuelled by the Zionists' "character assassination" of him during the war. In August of 1947, when the United Nations recommended the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, the *Times* supported the plan, not because it approved of Jewish sovereignty, Arthur was quick to explain, but because he wanted to give a vote of confidence to the still fragile international organization.

The following spring, the *Times* did not endorse Israel's declaration of independence; it merely accepted the act as a fait accompli. "My attitude toward Israel is the same as my attitude toward Indonesia," Sulzberger told the Newark *Jewish News*. "I wish it well, but am completely without nationalistic fervor toward it." Eventually, the *Times* established a bureau in Jerusalem, yet no Jewish reporter was ever assigned there while Sulzberger remained the publisher, and the paper forbade its editorial-page writers to refer to Israel as "the Jewish State."

THE succeeding generations of Sulzbergers are now, in many ways, like other highly assimilated Jews. Arthur Ochs (Punch) Sulzberger, his sisters, and their children went mainly to private schools where chapel attendance was mandatory. Punch remembers the traditional Christian hymns he learned as a student at St. Bernard's and the Lawrence-Smith School well enough to join in during the Thanksgiving sing-alongs that his third wife, Allison Cowles, organizes with her family. Among those in the "cousins' generation," as the family refers to the thirteen grandchildren of Arthur and Iphigene, roughly half had one non-Jewish parent and more than two-thirds have married non-Jews themselves. With the exception of a seder here and a bar mitzvah there, a specifically Jewish consciousness rarely intrudes.

Because of its absence, and also because of increased social and religious tolerance since the war, Punch's twenty-nine-year tenure as publisher, from 1963 to 1992, was largely untroubled by anxieties about Jewish issues such as his father had suffered. "Religion had gone down the ladder of importance, as far as the issues I was concerned with," he told us. "I can't recall a major discussion that centered on Judaism and the *Times*. It wasn't that much of a big thing." Punch's brother-in-law Orvil Dryfoos, who succeeded Arthur Hays Sulzberger as publisher in 1961 and who died prematurely, in 1963, at the age of fifty, had already broken one taboo by appointing John Oakes as the paper's first Jewish editorial-page editor. Punch went a step further in 1969, when he named A. M. Rosenthal managing editor and, eight years later, executive editor—moves that many people in the newsroom applauded as a repudiation of one of his father's most hated shibboleths. "*Was sagst du, Bubeleh*?" a beaming Rosenthal said to the reporter Richard Shepard when Shepard dropped by his office to congratulate him. "I bet you never thought you'd hear the managing editor of the *Times* speaking Yiddish!" When asked if he had consciously broken a barrier with the appointment of Rosenthal, Punch Sulzberger replied, "I don't recall that being part of the decision. He had all the credentials. We just never discussed, as far as I am concerned, how he, as a Jew, would report the news or run the newsroom."

If the old adage about the *Times* being a paper "owned by Jews, edited by Catholics, for Protestants" no longer applies, what remains is a family culture that discourages interference with the editors' prerogatives. Complaining about coverage or seeking attention for a pet cause is considered a serious breach of protocol. So inviolate is this principle that if a family member were to actively petition the newsroom the editors "would probably laugh," one of the cousins, Lynn Dolnick, said. Apart from requesting announcements of friends' weddings, or writing notes inquiring about questionable items in the paper, even Punch and his son, Arthur, Jr., observe a respectful separation between themselves and their top editors. While he was publisher, Punch used to rib Rosenthal by making him recite the names of all the people who had the power to decide what would appear on the *Times'* front page, starting with the managing editor and, in the event of his absence, his deputy, and so on down the masthead. He would always finish up with a twinkle, and say, "Well, Abe, tell me one more time so I understand: Why, then, would it be against the First Amendment if *I* put something on the front page?"

Since 1986, when Rosenthal stepped down to become a *Times* columnist (and an outspokenly pro-Likud one, at that), the paper has had two top editors, both of whom are Jewish—Max Frankel, who was expelled from Germany as a child a few days before Kristallnacht, and Joseph Lelyveld, whose father, Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, headed the Zionist Committee on Unity for Palestine in the forties. At the present time, the most talked-about candidates to replace Lelyveld—the editorial-page editor, Howell Raines, and the managing editor, Bill Keller—both happen to be non-Jews.

Where the family's influence has been felt most keenly is on the editorial page, but even there the publisher has traditionally ruled with a light touch. While Punch actively involved himself in major political endorsements, he rarely read other editorials before they were printed and he never attended editorial-board meetings. His chief complaint about John Oakes, his former editorial-page editor, who is also his cousin, was that he was too stridently anti-business, not that his page supported Palestinian rights. In a recently published memoir, Max Frankel, Oakes's successor, recalls that Punch "went out of his way" to welcome a 1977 editorial headed "The Jews and Jimmy Carter," which took American Jews to task for defending Israel's intransigence in the face of the President's attempt to broker peace. On the other hand, Frankel told us that the "unhappiest Punch ever was, probably, was when we criticized the Israelis for bombing a nuclear reactor inside Iraq," in 1981. In both cases, Sulzberger's response came after the fact: he had never discussed with Frankel the issues addressed in the first editorial, and he didn't see the other one until it ran.

THE current publisher, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr., has continued to take a hands-off approach to news and opinion, and, like several of his cousins, he has only a tenuous tie to his Jewish heritage. His mother, Barbara Grant, wasn't Jewish, and shortly af-

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ter she and Punch were divorced, in 1956, she became an Episcopalian. Eventually, Arthur and his sister Karen were confirmed at Manhattan's St. James Episcopal Church. At the time, Punch was discomfited about his children's being brought up as Christians, but not enough to insure that they were brought up as Jews. "I didn't do a damn thing," he later admitted.

In 1969, during a six-week trip to Israel, Arthur, Jr., horrified his father's cousin Ellen Straus and her husband, Peter, by challenging a senior official of the Israeli government who suggested that, no matter what happened in the world, everyone around the table would always have a homeland in Israel. "Excuse me, but I'm an Episcopalian! Is this still my country?" Arthur, Jr., said loudly. Thirty years later, he continues to regard the Israeli's comment as racist.

Nonetheless, his visit to Israel had a significant effect. In 1975, while he was working as a reporter for the Raleigh *Times*, he went on a nine-day Outward Bound expedition, and during an eight-mile run through the North Carolina hills he found himself neck and neck with a young, blond male instructor. As Arthur, Jr., began to flag, he tried to come up with something that would help push him on to victory. To his astonishment, he found himself thinking, I'm not going to let this Aryan bastard beat me. It was a visceral and unexpected claim to his Jewishness, he said, and it shocked him.

He subsequently read books about Judaism and erratically attended Jewish services. In the late seventies, during a stint in London as an Associated Press reporter, he held a Passover seder in his flat; his grandmother Iphigene, who happened to be in Britain, came as an honored—and somewhat nonplussed—guest. "I consider myself Jewish. No one else would, but I do," Arthur, Jr., told an oral historian for the American Jewish Committee several years later. Today, Arthur, Jr., remains proud of his Jewish background, but he considers himself an agnostic.

It's a distinction that matters little to the family. To some Jews, however, the family's ambiguity about its Jewishness matters greatly, and they continue to view the *Times* as hostile to Israel, especially now that the conservative Likud Party is in power. Whatever satisfaction Jews may have taken from the appointment of Thomas L. Friedman as the paper's first Jewish bureau chief in Jerusalem, in 1984, it was tempered by what they perceived to be his harsh and biased coverage of the Middle East, especially his devastating accounts of Israel's role in the Shatila-Sabra slaughter of Palestinian refugees in 1982, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize. "No one has ever, ever told me to cover a story in any way but without fear or favor," Friedman said. "If someone ever screamed at Arthur, Jr., or at his father about me, it has never been communicated to me. I feel totally insulated."

In 1994, Jean Sulzberger, a religiously observant cousin of Punch's, sent us a column from the Jerusalem *Post International* excoriating the *Times'* Jewish owners for the paper's coverage of reactions to the Hebron mosque massacre. At the bottom, she had scribbled, "The good news is that they think the publisher is Jewish." The comment neatly illustrates the family's journey from Adolph Ochs to the present day.

Recently, we asked Punch Sulzberger whether the family now considers itself Jewish. He replied, "It's a family that to a great extent tries to operate in the best part of the Jewish tradition—the Reform tradition we were brought up in—and those principles are spread pretty well through the family." Asked to enumerate the principles, he said, "Sharing with people who are less fortunate; tolerance; social justice." They are, he added, "very similar to the principles that guide the New York *Times*, and the family is very interested in insuring that those principles continue."

His remarks echoed the sentiments of his mother, Iphigene, who, long before she died in 1990, at the age of ninety-seven, handed down two rules of action to her descendants. One, which was drawn from her favorite verse in the Book of Micah, summed up her liberal politics and personal code of conduct: "Do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." The second was in the nature of a commandment: Preserve the New York *Times* as the world's greatest newspaper. In 1994, two years after he became publisher, we asked Arthur, Jr., to describe his personal faith. "I have the *Times*," he said without hesitation. "That's my religion. That's what I believe in, and it's a hell of a thing to hold on to." ♦

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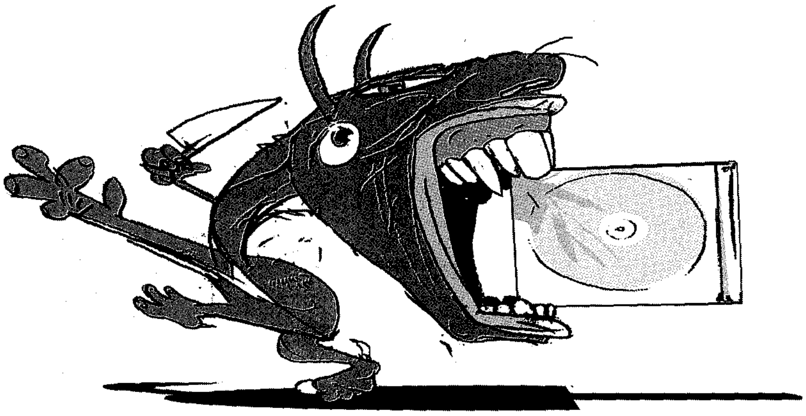
DESIGNER OF AUDIO CD PACKAGING ENTERS HELL

BY STEVE MARTIN

The burning gates of Hell were opened and the designer of CD packaging entered to the Devil's fanfare. "We've been wanting him down here for a long time," The One of Pure Evil said to his infernal minions, "but we decided to wait, because he was doing such good work above, wrapping the CDs with cellophane and that sticky tape strip. Ask him to dinner and be sure to invite the computer-manual people too."


ISTVAN BANYAI

The Devil vanished, missing the warm display of affection offered the inventor. "Beelzebub himself opened a nasty cut on his finger trying to unwrap a Streisand best-of," whispered an imp. A thick snake nuzzled closer, and wrapped itself around the inventor's leg. "He used to be enamored of the remote-control people, with their tiny little buttons jammed together, and their enigmatic abbreviations," the snake said, "but now all he ever talks about is you, you, you. Come on, let's get you ready for dinner. We can talk about your assignment later."

As the snake led the way to the dressing halls of Hell, a yearning, searching look came over its face. "How did you do it?" the snake asked. "You know, invent the packaging? Everyone wants to know."

The inventor, his feet comfortably aflame, and flattered by all the recognition, relaxed into his surroundings. "The original plastic CD 'jewel box' was just too damn easy to get into," he explained. "I mean, if we're going to prevent consumer access, for God's sake, let's prevent it! I wanted a packaging where the consumer would run to the kitchen for a knife, so there was a chance to at least slice open his hand."

"Is that when you got the idea for shrink-wrap?" said the snake.

"Shrink-wrap was nice for a while. I liked that there was absolutely no place to tear into it with a fingernail, but I knew there was further to go. That's when I hit on cellophane, cellophane with the illusion of an opening strip, where really none exists."

That night, at the celebratory dinner held once an aeon to honor new arrivals, the inventor sat to the Devil's right. On his left sat Cerberus, the watchdog of Hades and noted designer of the pineapple. The Devil chatted with the inventor all night long, then requested that he open another bottle of wine, this time with a two-pronged, side-slip corkscrew. The inventor perspired, and an hour later the bottle was uncorked.

At first, no one noticed the muffled disturbance from above, which soon grew into a sustained clamor. Eventually, the entire gathering looked toward the ceiling, and finally the Devil himself noticed that their attention had shifted. He raised his head.

Hovering in the ether were three angels, each holding an object. The inventor knew clearly what the objects were: the milk carton, the Ziploc bag, and the banana, all three perfectly designed packages. He remembered how he used to admire them before he fell into evil. The three angels glided toward the dais. One held the Ziploc bag over the aspirin-bottle people, and bathed them in an otherworldly light. A yellow glow from the banana washed over the hellhound Cerberus, designer of the pineapple, and the milk carton poured its white luminosity in the direction of the CD packager. The Devil stood up abruptly, roared something in Latin while succubae flew out of his mouth, and then angrily excused himself.

After the fiasco, the inventor went back to his room and fiddled with the five remotes it took to operate his VCR. Frustrated, he closed his eyes and contemplated the eternity to come in the bleakness of Hell, and how he would probably never again see a snowflake or a Fudgsicle. But then he thought of the nice meal he'd just had, and his new friends, and decided that snowflakes and Fudgsicles weren't that great anyway. He thought how the upcoming eternity might not be so bad after all. There was a knock at the door, and the snake entered.

"The Devil asked me to give you your assignment," the snake said. "Sometimes he gets powerful headaches. He wants you to be there to open the aspirin bottle."

"I think I could do that," the inventor replied.

"Just so you know, he likes a fresh aspirin every time, so you'll have to remove the tamper-resistant collar, the childproof cap, *and* the aluminum sealer," said the snake.

The inventor breathed easily. "No problem."

"Good," the snake said, and turned to go.

Just then a shudder rippled through the inventor's body. "Say"—his voice quavered with nervousness—"who will remove the cotton wad from the inside of the bottle?"

The snake turned slowly, its face contorted into the mask of Beelzebub. Then its voice deepened and transformed itself, as though it were coming from the bowels of Hell:

"Why, *you* will," he said. "HA HA HA HA HA!" ♦

ROBERT FROST

a life

JAY PARINI

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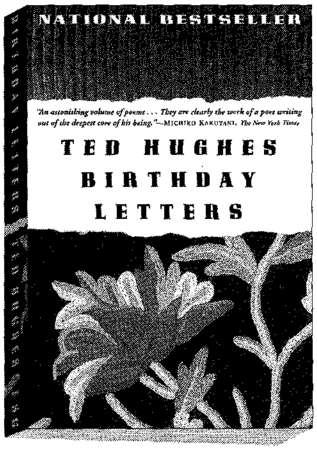

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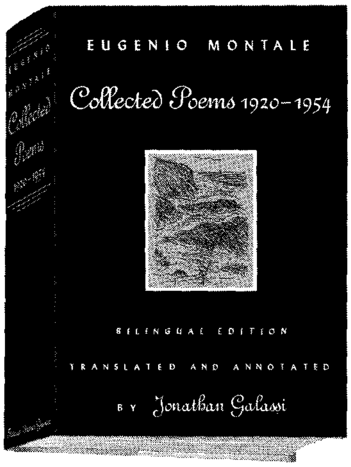

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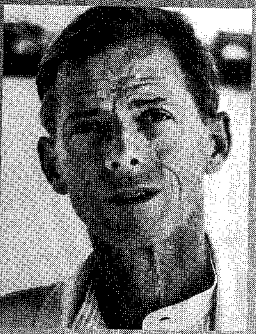
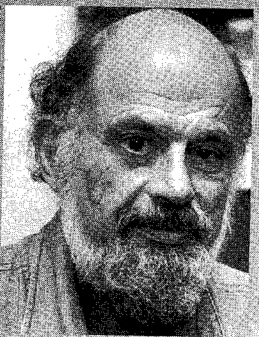
> *squeezed like a lemon or a lime,*
> *drop by drop,*
> *into atomic words."*
>
> *—Langston Hughes*

poetry in the cultural conversation





Adapted from David Lehman's foreword to "The Best American Poetry 1998," Scribner

Not long ago, the coverage of poetry in the national press was dominated by the lament for a lost audience. How quickly that has changed. The prestige of the art form has steadily climbed since this decade began, and there is a growing public appetite for the best poems of our times. As we celebrate National Poetry Month this month, the nation's hot romance with poetry shows no sign of cooling off.

When Ted Hughes' poems about his marriage to Sylvia Plath were published last year, the *Times* carried the story on its front page, and within weeks, Hughes' "Birthday Letters" had displaced Toni Morrison's novel "Paradise" as the number one hardcover bestseller at Coliseum Books. At the same time, Robert Pinsky, probably the highest profile U.S. Poet Laureate to date, with frequent appearances on "The News Hour with Jim Lehrer," launched a major initiative with his "Favorite Poem Project." Among the citizens who volunteered to read their favorite poems for an archive that the project will create at the Library of Congress, were a zookeeper at the Bronx Zoo, a trapeze artist, a belly dancer, and a ballpark beer vendor. Reflecting on the larger purpose of the project, Pinsky said: "If a thousand years from now anyone should ask who Americans were, this archive might help give an answer."

Web sites devoted to poetry are proliferating. The Academy of American Poets' Web site aspires to be, in executive director Bill Wadsworth's words, "a virtual encyclopedia for modern American poets." You can read up on the modernist revolution of Eliot and Pound, click on a "theme exhibit"

April: Once the "Cruelest" Month, Now the Coolest Month

celebrating
NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

(a little anthology of poems "curated" by a notable poet), or check out the poets' archive, which comprises 143 poets and is growing. Each listed poet gets his or her Web page with a photograph, a bibliography, links to representative poems, and a text like that accompanying the paintings in a museum exhibition.

Today, when shoe manufacturers plan a new ad campaign, they are liable to consider enlisting the help of poets, in the same way that Ford, forty years ago, asked Marianne Moore's help in naming the ill-fated car that management (ignoring Moore's recommendations) ultimately called the Edsel. Poems are appearing on beer coasters and subway posters. In Los Angeles, last winter, an organization called Poets Anonymous spent an estimated one million dollars to rent sixty well-placed billboards, which were filled with verse excerpts from such poets as Pablo Neruda, Charles Bukowski, and Lucille Clifton. Poets are reading their poems in smoky downtown bars, performing them at competitive slams, or rapping them in hip-hop rhythms.

In April 1998, on "The Tonight Show," Jay Leno took camera and mic out into the street, informed random pedestrians that it was National Poetry Month and—in what seemed like a good-natured spoof of the Favorite Poem Project—asked if they had a poem to share. That month the Academy of American Poets sponsored a giveaway of 100,000 copies of "101 Great American Poems" and other volumes. Inspired by poet Joseph Brodsky, who had declared that poetry books should be as universal in hotel rooms as the Gideon Bible, Andrew Carroll of the American Poetry and Literacy Project crossed the country in a rental truck distributing the wares. More giveaways are underway. All of Volkswagen's new cars shipped this month—an estimated 40,000—will come equipped with a poetry book as a standard "feature."

Last April, tollbooth operators passed along five hundred free copies of Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" to motorists crossing the Walt Whitman Bridge in Camden, NJ. Poet Rita Dove recited Whitman's immortal work at the White House when President and Mrs. Clinton hosted a celebration of American poets and poetry. Hillary Clinton initiated the proceedings by quoting from Howard Nemerov's poem "The Makers." The President revealed that he had had to memorize a hundred lines of "Macbeth" in high school. He credited this experience with teaching him "about the dangers of blind ambitions, the fleeting nature of fame, the ultimate emptiness of power disconnected from higher purpose." Said Clinton, "Mr. Shakespeare made me a better president."

"The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem," Whitman once asserted. The genius of the United States, he wrote, rests not in its executives and legislatures but in the "unrhymed poetry" of the American people, which awaits "the gigantic and generous treatment worthy of it." The American people in 1999 continue to find inspiration and sustenance in Whitman's words and in his vision of a country that celebrates its poets as affectionately as they have celebrated it.

VERSE InSites

There are a number of sites where you can access information about poetry in cyberspace. Here's a sampling of those currently available.

www.poets.org

www.favoritepoem.org

www.poems.com

wings.buffalo.edu/epc

www.poetrysociety.org

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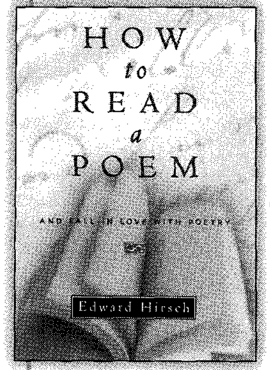

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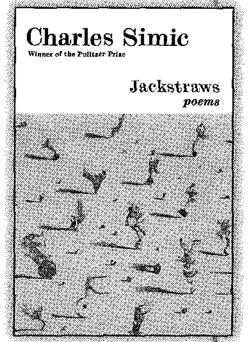

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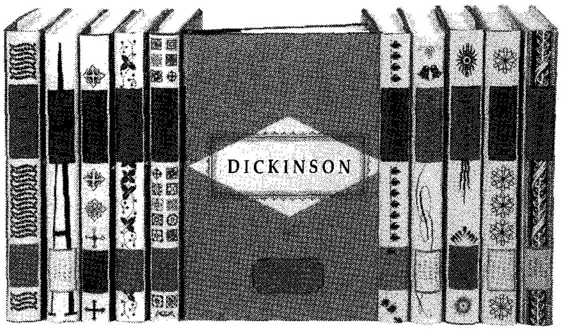

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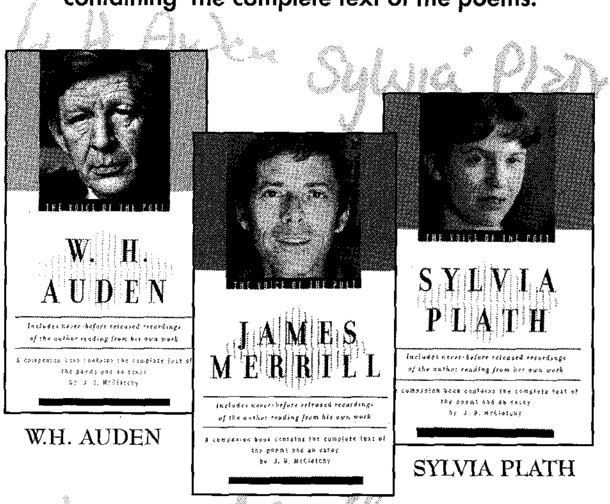

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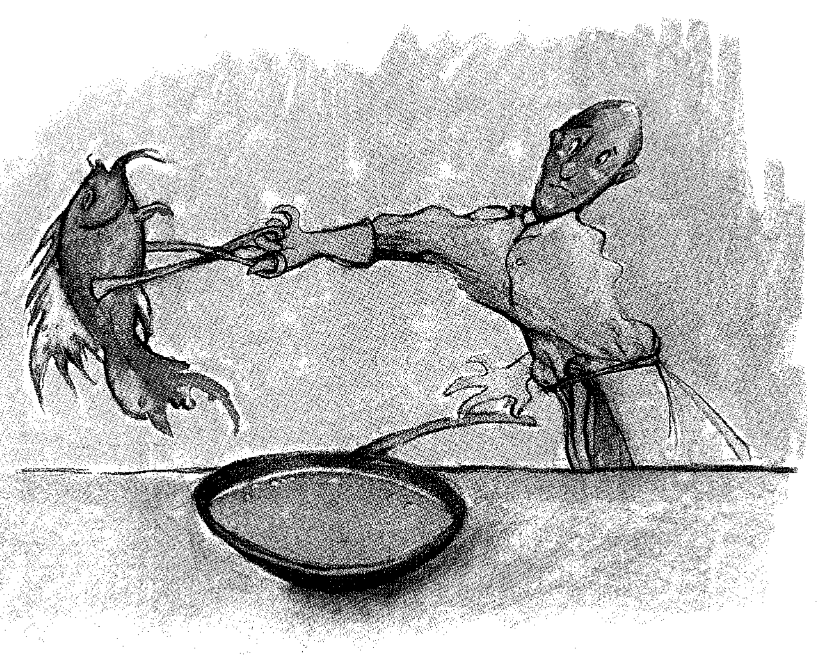
A New York chef spills some trade secrets.

BY ANTHONY BOURDAIN

GOOD food, good eating, is all about blood and organs, cruelty and decay. It's about sodium-loaded pork fat, stinky triple-cream cheeses, the tender thymus glands and distended livers of young animals. It's about danger—risking the dark, bacterial forces of beef, chicken, cheese, and shellfish. Your first two hundred and seven Wellfleet oysters may transport you to a state of rapture, but your two hundred and eighth may send you to bed with the sweats, chills, and vomits.



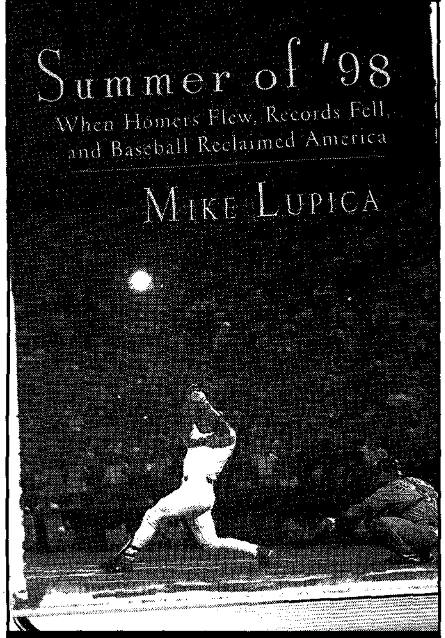
Monday's fish has been around since Friday, under God knows what conditions.

ADRIAN GILL

Gastronomy is the science of pain. Professional cooks belong to a secret society whose ancient rituals derive from the principles of stoicism in the face of humiliation, injury, fatigue, and the threat of illness. The members of a tight, well-greased kitchen staff are a lot like a submarine crew. Confined for most of their waking hours in hot, airless spaces, and ruled by despotic leaders, they often acquire the characteristics of the poor saps who were press-ganged into the royal navies of Napoleonic times—superstition, a contempt for outsiders, and a loyalty to no flag but their own.

A good deal has changed since Orwell's memoir of the months he spent as a dishwasher in "Down and Out in Paris and London." Gas ranges and exhaust fans have gone a long way toward increasing the life span of the working culinarian. Nowadays, most aspiring cooks come into the business because they want to: they have chosen this life, studied for it. Today's top chefs are like star athletes. They bounce from kitchen to kitchen—free agents in search of more money, more acclaim.

I've been a chef in New York for more than ten years, and, for the decade before that, a dishwasher, a prep drone, a line cook, and a sous-chef. I came into the business when cooks still smoked on the line and wore headbands. A few years ago, I wasn't surprised to hear rumors of a study of the nation's prison population which reportedly found that the leading civilian occupation among inmates before they were put behind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bars was "cook." As most of us in the restaurant business know, there is a powerful strain of criminality in the industry, ranging from the dope-dealing busboy with beeper and cell phone to the restaurant owner who has two sets of accounting books. In fact, it was the unsavory side of professsional cooking that attracted me to it in the first place. In the early seventies, I dropped out of college and transferred to the Culinary Institute of America. I wanted it all: the cuts and burns on hands and wrists, the ghoulish kitchen humor, the free food, the pilfered booze, the camaraderie that flourished within rigid order and nerve-shattering chaos. I would climb the chain of command from *mal carne* (meaning "bad meat," or "new guy") to chefdom—doing whatever it took until I ran my own kitchen and had my own crew of cutthroats, the culinary equivalent of "The Wild Bunch."

A year ago, my latest, doomed mission—a high-profile restaurant in the Times Square area—went out of business. The meat, fish, and produce purveyors got the news that they were going to take it in the neck for yet another ill-conceived enterprise. When customers called for reservations, they were informed by a prerecorded announcement that our doors had closed. Fresh from that experience, I began thinking about becoming a traitor to my profession.

Say it's a quiet Monday night, and you've just checked your coat in that swanky Art Deco update in the Flatiron district, and you're looking to tuck into a thick slab of pepper-crusted yellowfin tuna or a twenty-ounce cut of certified Black Angus beef, well-done—what are you in for?

The fish specialty is reasonably priced, and the place got two stars in the *Times*. Why not go for it? If you like four-day-old fish, be my guest. Here's how things usually work. The chef orders his seafood for the weekend on Thursday night. It arrives on Friday morning. He's hoping to sell the bulk of it on Friday and Saturday nights, when he knows that the restaurant will be busy, and he'd like to run out of the last few orders by Sunday evening. Many fish purveyors don't deliver on Saturday, so the chances are that the Monday-night tuna you want has been kicking around in the kitchen since Friday morning, under God knows what conditions. When a kitchen is in full swing, proper refrigeration is almost nonexistent, what with the many openings of the refrigerator door as the cooks rummage frantically during the rush, mingling your tuna with the chicken, the lamb, or the beef. Even if the chef has ordered just the right amount of tuna for the weekend, and has had to reorder it for a Monday delivery, the only safeguard against the seafood supplier's off-loading junk is the presence of a vigilant chef who can make sure that the delivery is fresh from *Sunday* night's market.

Generally speaking, the good stuff comes in on Tuesday: the seafood is fresh, the supply of prepared food is new, and the chef, presumably, is relaxed after his day off. (Most chefs don't work on Monday.) Chefs prefer to cook for weekday customers rather than for weekenders, and they like to start the new week with their most creative dishes. In New York, locals dine during the week. Weekends are considered amateur nights—for tourists, rubes, and the well-done-ordering pretheatre hordes. The fish may be just as fresh on Friday, but it's on Tuesday that you've got the good will of the kitchen on your side.

People who order their meat well-done perform a valuable service for those of us in the business who are cost-conscious: they pay for the privilege of eating our garbage. In many kitchens, there's a time-honored practice called "save for well-done." When one of the cooks finds a particularly unlovely piece of steak—tough, riddled with nerve and connective tissue, off the hip end of the loin, and maybe a little stinky from age—he'll dangle it in the air and say, "Hey, Chef, whaddya want me to do with *this*?" Now, the chef has three options. He can tell the cook to throw the offending item into the trash, but that means a total loss, and in the restaurant business every item of cut, fabricated, or prepared food should earn at least three times the amount it originally cost if the chef is to make his correct food-cost percentage. Or he can decide to serve that steak to "the family"—that is, the floor staff—though that, economically, is the same as throwing it out. But no. What he's going to do is repeat the mantra of cost-conscious chefs everywhere: "Save

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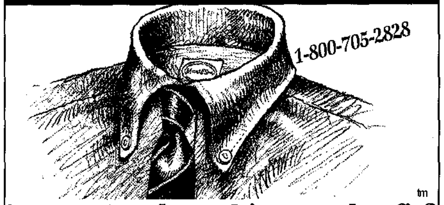

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"It's been done, but I don't think it's been redone."

for well-done." The way he figures it, the philistine who orders his food well-done is not likely to notice the difference between food and flotsam.

Then there are the People Who Brunch. The "B" word is dreaded by all dedicated cooks. We hate the smell and spatter of omelettes. We despise hollandaise, home fries, those pathetic fruit garnishes, and all the other cliché accompaniments designed to induce a credulous public into paying $12.95 for two eggs. Nothing demoralizes an aspiring Escoffier faster than requiring him to cook egg-white omelettes or eggs over easy with bacon. You can dress brunch up with all the focaccia, smoked salmon, and caviar in the world, but it's still breakfast.

Even more despised than the Brunch People are the vegetarians. Serious cooks regard these members of the dining public—and their Hezbollah-like splinter faction, the vegans—as enemies of everything that's good and decent in the human spirit. To live life without veal or chicken stock, fish cheeks, sausages, cheese, or organ meats is treasonous.

LIKE most other chefs I know, I'm amused when I hear people object to pork on nonreligious grounds. "Swine are filthy animals," they say. These people have obviously never visited a poultry farm. Chicken—America's favorite food—goes bad quickly; handled carelessly, it infects other foods with salmonella; and it bores the hell out of chefs. It occupies its ubiquitous place on menus as an option for customers who can't decide what they want to eat. Most chefs believe that supermarket chickens in this country are slimy and tasteless compared with European varieties. Pork, on the other hand, is cool. Farmers stopped feeding garbage to pigs decades ago, and even if you eat pork rare you're more likely to win the Lotto than to contract trichinosis. Pork tastes different, depending on what you do with it, but chicken always tastes like chicken.

Another much maligned food these days is butter. In the world of chefs, however, butter is in *everything*. Even non-French restaurants—the Northern Italian; the new American, the ones where the chef brags about how he's "getting away from butter and cream"—throw butter around like crazy. In almost every restaurant worth patronizing, sauces are enriched with mellowing, emulsifying butter. Pastas are tightened with it. Meat and fish are seared with a mixture of butter and oil. Shallots and chicken are caramelized with butter. It's the first and last thing in almost every pan: the final hit is called "*monter au beurre*." In a good restaurant, what this all adds up to is that you could be putting away almost a stick of butter with every meal.

IF you are one of those people who cringe at the thought of strangers fondling your food, you shouldn't go out to eat. As the author and former chef Nicolas Freeling notes in his definitive book "The Kitchen," the better the restaurant, the more your food has been prodded, poked, handled, and tasted. By the time a three-star crew has finished carving and arranging your saddle of monkfish with dried cherries and wild-herb-infused *nage* into a Parthenon or a Space Needle, it's had dozens of sweaty fingers all over it. Gloves? You'll find a box of surgical gloves—in my kitchen we call them "anal-research gloves"—over every station on the line, for the benefit of the health inspectors, but does anyone actually use them? Yes, a cook will slip a pair on every now and then, especially when he's handling something with a lingering odor, like salmon. But during the hours of service gloves are clumsy and dangerous. When you're using your hands constantly, latex will make you drop things, which is the last thing you want to do.

Finding a hair in your food will make anyone gag. But just about the only place you'll see anyone in the kitchen wearing a hat or a hairnet is Blimpie. For most chefs, wearing anything on their head, especially one of those picturesque paper toques—they're often referred to as "coffee filters"—is a nuisance: they dissolve when you sweat, bump into range hoods, burst into flame.

The fact is that most good kitchens are far less septic than your kitchen at home. I run a scrupulously clean, orderly restaurant kitchen, where food is rotated and handled and stored very conscientiously. But if the city's Department of Health or the E.P.A. decided to enforce every aspect of its codes, most of us would be out on the street. Recently, there was a news report about the practice of recycling bread. By means of a hidden camera in a restaurant, the reporter was horrified to see returned bread being sent right back out to the floor. This, to me, wasn't news: the reuse of bread has been an open secret—and a fairly standard practice—in the industry for years. It makes more sense to worry about what happens to the leftover table butter—many restaurants recycle it for hollandaise.

What do I like to eat after hours? Strange things. Oysters are my favorite, especially at three in the morning, in the company of my crew. Focaccia pizza with robiola cheese and white truffle oil is good, especially at Le Madri on a summer afternoon in the outdoor patio. Frozen vodka at Siberia Bar is also good, particularly if a cook from one of the big hotels shows up with beluga. At Indigo, on Tenth Street, I love the mushroom strudel and the daube of beef. At my own place, I love a spicy boudin noir that squirts blood in your mouth; the braised fennel the way my sous-chef makes it; scraps from duck confit; and fresh cockles steamed with greasy Portuguese sausage.

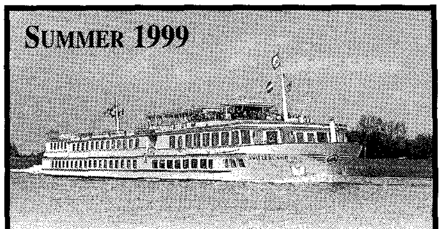
I LOVE the sheer weirdness of the kitchen life: the dreamers, the crackpots, the refugees, and the sociopaths with whom I continue to work; the ever-present smells of roasting bones, searing fish, and simmering liquids; the noise and clatter, the hiss and spray, the flames, the smoke, and the steam. Admittedly, it's a life that grinds you down. Most of us who live and operate in the culinary underworld are in some fundamental way dysfunctional. We've all chosen to turn our backs on the nine-to-five, on ever having a Friday or Saturday night off, on ever having a normal relationship with a non-cook.

Being a chef is a lot like being an air-traffic controller: you are constantly dealing with the threat of disaster. You've got to be Mom and Dad, drill sergeant, detective, psychiatrist, and priest to a crew of opportunistic, mercenary hooligans, whom you must protect from the nefarious and often foolish strategies of owners. Year after year, cooks contend with bouncing paychecks, irate purveyors, desperate owners looking for the masterstroke that will cure their restaurant's ills: Live Cabaret! Free Shrimp! New Orleans Brunch!

In America, the professional kitchen is the last refuge of the misfit. It's a place for people with bad pasts to find a new family. It's a haven for foreigners—Ecuadorians, Mexicans, Chinese, Senegalese, Egyptians, Poles. In New York, the main linguistic spice is Spanish. "*Hey, maricón! chupa mis huevos*" means, roughly, "How are you, valued comrade? I hope all is well." And you hear "*Hey, baboso!* Put some more brown jiz on the fire and check your meez before the sous comes back there and fucks you in the *culo!*," which means "Please reduce some additional *demi-glace*, brother, and reëxamine your *mise en place*, because the sous-chef is concerned about your state of readiness."

Since we work in close quarters, and so many blunt and sharp objects are at hand, you'd think that cooks would kill one another with regularity. I've seen guys duking it out in the waiter station over who gets a table for six. I've seen a chef clamp his teeth on a waiter's nose. And I've seen plates thrown—I've even thrown a few myself—but I've never heard of one cook jamming a boning knife into another cook's rib cage or braining him with a meat mallet. Line cooking, done well, is a dance—a high-speed, Balanchine collaboration.

I used to be a terror toward my floor staff, particularly in the final months of my last restaurant. But not anymore. Recently, my career has taken an eerily appropriate turn: these days, I'm the chef de cuisine of a much loved, old-school French brasserie/bistro where the customers eat their meat rare, vegetarians are scarce, and every part of the animal—hooves, snout, cheeks, skin, and organs—is avidly and appreciatively prepared and consumed. Cassoulet, pigs' feet, tripe, and charcuterie sell like crazy. We thicken many sauces with foie gras and pork blood, and proudly hurl around spoonfuls of duck fat and butter, and thick hunks of country bacon. I made a traditional French pot-au-feu a few weeks ago, and some of my French colleagues—hardened veterans of the business all—came into my kitchen to watch the first order go out. As they gazed upon the intimidating heap of short ribs, oxtail, beef shoulder, cabbage, turnips, carrots, and potatoes, the expressions on their faces were those of religious supplicants. I have come home. ♦



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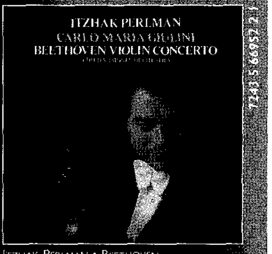

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

PARIS AND HIS SISTERS

Death row is an odd place to acquire an extended family.

BY CALVIN TRILLIN

PHOEBE ELLSWORTH

As Phoebe Ellsworth recalls one of her shorter death-row correspondences, the inmate wrote, roughly, "You know how it is, Dr. Ellsworth: You go to a party, you have a few drinks, somebody gets killed," and she replied, roughly, "Dear Ripper: No, I don't know how it is. I've been to parties. I've had a few drinks. I've never killed anyone."

Ellsworth, who teaches in both the law school and the psychology department at the University of Michigan, has corresponded with a number of convicts who are awaiting execution, and the experience has not given her a romantic view of death-row inmates. "Two or three letters is about par for the course," she says. "Then they get into how I'm going to be their own personal mother and bank. Paris was much cleverer. He told me he was interested in doing research and that he was uniquely positioned to do studies of, basically, the mind of the murderer. This was pretty interesting, coming from a death-row guy."

When Ellsworth got her Ph.D. in psychology, in 1970, she was enamored of what she calls "beautiful experimental designs," but, in the spirit of the times, she was also intent on bringing about changes in the society. While teaching at Stanford, she found herself drawn into studying the death penalty. She has done research on the roots of public attitudes toward capital punishment, for instance, and on whether juries that lawyers call death-qualified—juries culled of people who say they could never impose the death penalty—are fundamentally skewed toward the prosecution. (She concluded that they were. The Supreme Court remained unconvinced.) Her articles—or references to her articles—tend to attract mail from death-row inmates who assure her that she would find their case unique and fascinating. In 1982, she heard from a death-row inmate in Arizona, Paris Carriger, who suggested, essentially, that they become collaborators.

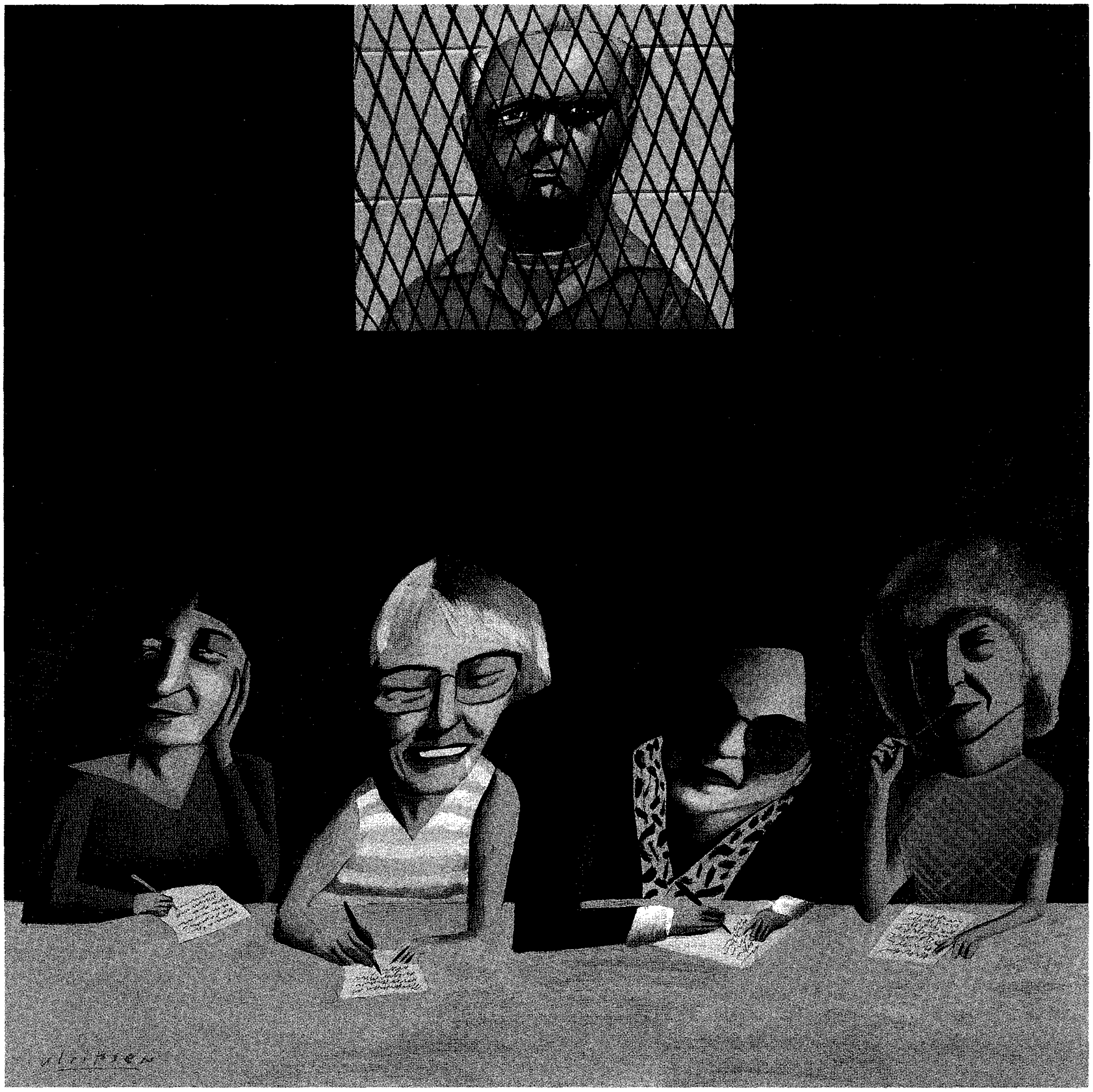
Carriger wrote that he naturally had access to any number of people who had been convicted of murder. ("Few of these men know why they have acted the way they have. They only have some vague sense that it was justified in some way.") He also had some theories he wanted to pursue, particularly concerning the role of cultural conflicts in violence. Still, Ellsworth didn't seriously expect the survey he envisioned to become trailblazing research on capital punishment. In fact, she doesn't know how serious Carriger was about it himself; she has always assumed that he proposed it partly as a way of attracting her attention. "The survey never happened," she now says, "although our correspondence over the first couple of years keeps referring to it. Little by little, he's telling his story and asking about me."

Phoebe Ellsworth is a slim woman who has an easy candor in conversation, as if the admonition "Let's not kid ourselves" had already been stipulated by all present. She also happens to have an almost Victorian appreciation of letter writing. Sooner or later, she and Carriger were sharing thoughts about the progress of his case and about her students and about what he might do if he ever got out (for a while he was partial to a scheme for providing and servicing aquariums for doctors' and lawyers' offices) and about her family. He proved to be articulate and thoughtful, and his prose was occasionally enlivened by a country phrase—so that Robert Dunbar, the former cellmate who had fingered him for the murder, was described as "playing the state like a canal carp on kite twine." After a few years, Carriger asked if he could write to Ellsworth's daughter, Sasha, who was then four or five.

"It was somewhat of a dilemma for me," Ellsworth now says. From what Carriger had told her about the charge that put him on death row—he had been convicted of robbing a Phoenix jeweller, Robert Shaw, and then murdering him, mainly by smashing him on the head over and over again with a cast-iron skillet—she gradually came to believe that he might actually be innocent. But she also believed that he was very likely to be executed. On the remote chance that he ever got out of prison, it was conceivable that he might pursue a life of crime; he had been convicted of felonies other than the Shaw murder. On the other hand, Ellsworth was reluctant to prohibit a correspondence between her daughter and an imprisoned man she herself had begun to think of as a friend. "I knew it would be good for him," she says. "And I knew that in some ways it could probably make Sasha a more tolerant person."

Ellsworth's husband, Sam Gross, was all for a correspondence between his daughter and Paris Carriger. Gross is a University of Michigan law-school professor who practiced for a while as a criminal lawyer; he and Ellsworth had met at Stanford when both of them were doing research on death-qualified juries. Partly because of the wariness that a criminal practice tends to nurture, he was more skeptical than his wife about Carriger's claim of not having had anything to do with Shaw's death. Gross believed, though, that compared with the issue of whether Carriger had received a fair trial, actual innocence was "not a particularly important question," and he was convinced that Paris Carriger had not received a fair trial.

And so it turned out that Sasha Gross, who is now seventeen, took it for granted from an early age that she had an extra grownup friend she'd never seen. He was a friend who sometimes



Paris Carriger called Phoebe Ellsworth, Elsa Crumpley, Barbara Sproul, and Katherine Soltis "the group."

MARK ULRIKSEN

sent gifts to her and, later, to her younger sister, Emma. He was a friend whose advice Sasha came to value on the sorts of subjects that kids tend to have on their minds—the scary part of growing up ("When you say that you sometimes wish you could stay a kid forever and do the Peter Pan saga I think that you are confusing being a kid with having fun. You don't have to give up having fun just to be an adult") or the agony of studying math ("As for what is being taught in school not being useful . . . the problem is predicting . . . what knowledge is going to be useful to which person. . . . Math is not always easy but the mind that can use it can think clearly") or the problem of finding a suitable gift for a parent ("My favorite gifts for people come from listening to them dream when they tell me about their plans. I try not to give a gift and pretend that it is going to make up for ignoring them or neglecting them for the rest of the year. The best gifts are ones that remind people of their own worth"). Sasha was aware that Carriger had made some awful mistakes of his own, but she also thought that the opportunity to learn from them might have been what enabled him to give such good advice.

As Phoebe Ellsworth recalls her own correspondence with Paris Carriger, "there were layers and layers of scam that only gradually dropped away." Even after he was no longer trying to impress her, he occasionally lapsed into embellishments about his accomplishments or displayed what she calls "flickers of paranoia." Not every statement he made was something she thought could be taken absolutely at face value. "There were two years when Paris wanted me to believe he was a

Navajo," she says cheerfully, adding that she did believe for a while that he was part Navajo and that she could see how a desire to be a Navajo had gradually overcome a family tree that seemed to consist exclusively of poor white people. ("I am glad that you like your moccasins," Carriger wrote to Emma during that period. "Navajos are often called Native Americans but in fact we are Navajos in the same way that French and Spanish are different from each other.")

Ellsworth found it unsurprising that Carriger eventually had some interest in what she could do for him. He was, after all, on death row, with no resources beyond what Sam Gross has called "an uncanny ability to make contact with people." All in all, Phoebe Ellsworth, the product of Bryn Mawr and Radcliffe and Stanford, found that Paris Carriger, who had lived mainly in one sort of penal institution or another from the age of twelve, was "a worthy person to write to." As for Carriger, he wrote Ellsworth in 1987, "I live with a family of choice of which you and yours are members with or without your wish to be. It is a way to feel a part of the world. In a personal sense, sharing your family makes me feel very honored."

Over the years, Phoebe Ellsworth's belief in Carriger's innocence only increased; she once wrote a tract on his case entitled "If You Were an Innocent Man on Death Row What Would You Do?" But she also seems to cling to the tone of the researcher who understands that in any study the results one was hoping for may have to be abandoned when the real figures are in. Thinking back recently on her relationship with Paris Carriger, she said, "Of course it began more heavily as a scam, and naturally I'm gullible enough to think that after eighteen years the scam part has faded and the actual relationship part has increased. But it didn't matter. It was such a good scam—if it was a scam—that it was worth it."

ELSA CRUMPLEY

"WE'RE lefties," Elsa Crumpley says. "We're not do-gooders. We're lefties." She's in her middle eighties now, long retired from teaching elementary school in San Jose, California. She lives in a small house in nearby Los Gatos, with her husband, Forrest, who was once a journeyman printer in San Francisco and later ran his own printing shop in Los Gatos—becoming known, he now jokes, as "printer-in-residence to the Left." They have been married for fifty-seven years. Forrest Crumpley spends a lot of his time working with an organization called Affordable Housing Network of Santa Clara County. His business card, identifying him as a member of the Federation of Retired Union Members of Santa Clara County, carries the legend "Labor Produces All Wealth—And Deserves to Keep More of It." Elsa Crumpley, among other activities, writes a column for the newsletter of the San Jose Peace Center. Some of her notes on the Carriger case are on the back of stationery that says "People for Accessible Health Care." Before she became acquainted by mail with Paris Carriger, the death penalty was one issue she hadn't been terribly concerned with ("I had enough to do elsewhere, trying to change foreign policy"). She'd made an exception, of course, for the Rosenberg case. "We were active in that struggle," she says.

Politics was among the many subjects Elsa Crumpley and Paris Carriger discussed by mail. He held strong views about politics in the abstract ("It is said . . . that 'power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely' . . . but the truth is that *power attracts the corruptible people*") and about politics in the particular. "Agreed Clinton has a lot of weasel in him but I prefer the weasel we know to whoever the right wing wants to replace him with," Carriger once wrote to her. "All we need in the White House is one of those sour religious creeps who has never been laid in his life and wants to push the button so we can all go to Jesus as soon as possible."

Elsa Crumpley had sort of inherited Paris Carriger. A friend who was corresponding with death-row inmates through a Quaker project had passed him on around 1982. Crumpley herself enlisted a friend named Patricia Stanley, who, having had a longtime interest in American Indians, was

"He's run away to join the media circus."

ANGELUS

One opens the book at random, opens the day,
reads the old architecture whose face runs
like a dog along the window while the sun plays
catch with itself, bounding from Sunday

to Sunday, speechless with desire.
What more could there be than this?
The beams of the cottage, the sheltering
bones of your hips, the great abbey

of the afternoon that fills as we watch with sound
and the voices trail back to you from the apse,
from the nave, from the shell-shaped hollow
at the base of your throat that even as it says

what it wants, even as it wills it, holds back,
and a great threshing noise saws the air
as the new beams are hewn all over again as
they must be continually, and knowing this

our very words, making and undoing, are torn,
the color of blood. For why are you here before me
after all this time, time which was mine alone
but now, because we have brought each other

here, belongs to you? We talk to each other
as birds do under the eaves, like the swallows
who return and return, and each time find
everything changed, everything different.

—CYNTHIA ZARIN

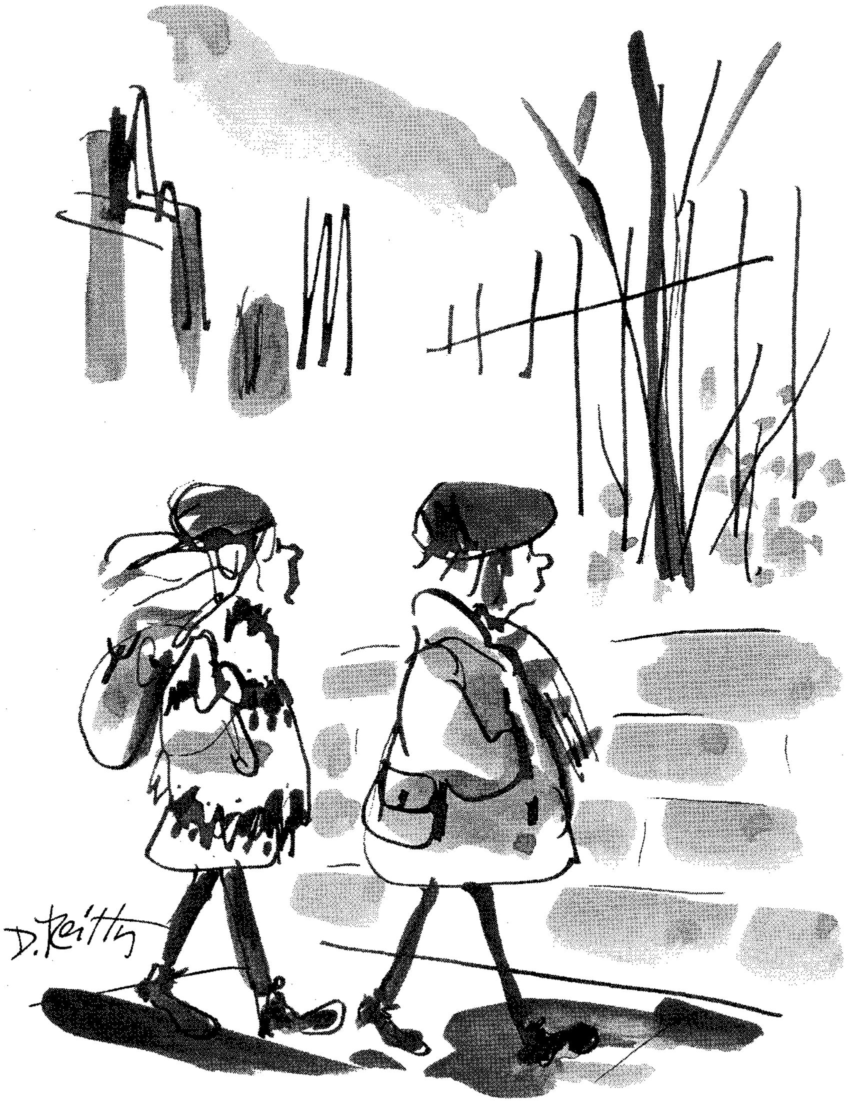
enthusiastic about making contact with Carriger when she heard that he was part Navajo. The two women became what Elsa Crumpley sometimes calls "Paris's Western operation." Crumpley tried, without much success, to build a funding base from churches and anti-death-penalty groups and individuals. For a number of years, the Western operation was barely aware of people like Phoebe Ellsworth. "He had an Eastern operation and a Western operation," Crumpley says. "And never the twain should meet, until the clemency hearing."

As an activist, Elsa Crumpley believes in making noise. Once she and Carriger had become acquainted, whoever was in charge of the Arizona Department of Corrections could count on hearing from Los Gatos about the conditions under which Carriger was being held on death row. She also stood ready to try attracting the general public to his cause, although death-penalty lawyers often prefer to hold off on that sort of thing unless an execution is imminent. "We may have to do a public campaign *but* now is not the time," Carriger once wrote her, when she seemed itching to make his situation better known. "It's an election year. Noise at the wrong time could turn me into a political football. In a left wing state a good idea, in *this* right wing state *bad idea.*"

ELSA CRUMPLEY was eager to do anything she could do, because she was convinced not just that Carriger hadn't received a fair trial but that he was not guilty of the crime. She wouldn't have agreed with Sam Gross that Carriger's innocence was not a particularly important question; for her, it became central to the injustice she saw being perpetrated. At the time of the crime, in March of 1978, Carriger, who only a few months before had completed an eleven-year stretch for aggravated assault, was a wary loner, temporarily living in a van parked next to the house of Robert Dunbar—the ex-cellmate who was perhaps the closest thing he had to a friend. One day, during some less than uplifting wanderings around Phoenix, the two of them dropped into Robert Shaw's jewelry store to replace a watch crystal. Someone returned later that afternoon to rob Shaw; Dunbar, leading police to various pieces of evidence, swore it had been Paris Carriger. From the beginning, Carriger insisted that Robert Dunbar, after committing the crime himself, had engineered a frameup to divert the blame and gain leniency for other crimes. ("It is him or me," Carriger said at his sentencing, "and Mr. Dunbar is an old hand at seeing to it that it is not him.") Elsa Crumpley, whose correspondence with Carriger had given her great respect for both his intellect and his sensitivity, became convinced that he was telling the truth.

If she'd had any lingering doubts about his innocence, they evaporated in 1987. In a hearing on Carriger's request for a new trial, Robert Dunbar, back in prison and convinced that he was dying from emphysema, repeated under oath what he had previously confessed to a church worker and a few others, including his parents: he had indeed robbed and killed Robert Shaw and framed Carriger for the crime. He provided corroborating details of the murder scene, and his ex-wife swore he'd forced her to lie to the police to create an alibi. "I've made my peace with God," Dunbar said. For Elsa Crumpley, "everything fell into place" after Dunbar confessed. That wasn't how the State of Arizona saw it—even before Dunbar, apparently feeling a bit better, recanted the confession several weeks later. The prosecutor argued that the best evidence was still the evidence in the original trial. The judge, declining to order a new trial, said that Dunbar was not believable.

Having the state's principal witness against a convicted murderer confess that he himself committed the crime—or, alternatively, having the state's principal witness identify himself as a perjurer—tends to be less helpful to the



"I told my parents that if grades were so important they should have paid for a smarter egg donor."

• •

convict's cause in the federal courts than a non-lawyer like Elsa Crumpley might have assumed. In Herrera v. Collins, the Supreme Court later held that it is not unconstitutional to execute somebody simply because doubts about his guilt have emerged; and, interpreting the Herrera decision in Carriger's case, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals eventually ruled that to win a new trial Carriger would have to prove not simply that new evidence would prevent a jury from finding him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt but also that he was "unquestionably innocent."

For Carriger's supporters, Dunbar's confession proved to be a rush followed by a letdown. It provided evidence for what they'd believed about Carriger's innocence, followed by the dismaying realization that such evidence wasn't enough to stop the process that seemed to be leading inexorably to his execution. (By the time Dunbar made another near-death confession to a cellmate—this was in 1991, and this time he really did die—nobody expected much to come of it.) Elsa Crumpley, who had spent decades opposing injustice wherever she detected it, was simply outraged. A few months after Dunbar confessed in court, she lent Carriger five thousand dollars from her savings. It was, she later stated at his clemency hearing, "to carry on, to win justice, to help compensate for the terrible letdown and the destruction of our faith in the legal system." As an activist, she was prepared to make as much noise as she could, and she also felt the need to put her money where her mouth was.

BARBARA SPROUL

BARBARA SPROUL, the only New Yorker among Carriger's close supporters, says that people who weren't schooled in the law—or, in her phrase, "people who keep confusing it with truth and justice"—were genuinely astounded that Robert Dunbar's confession in open court seemed to have little impact on Paris Carriger's situation. She herself had become accustomed to a procedural morass in which, for one reason or another, the courts that Carriger's lawyers appealed to almost never seemed able to hear issues on their merits—issues such as the quality of representation offered by Carriger's defense counsel, whose role in the original trial had been described by the Arizona Supreme Court as more in the nature of a "neutral observer," or issues such as the state's failure to share with the defense what it knew about Robert Dunbar's history of turning other people in for crimes he had committed himself. "But when Dunbar came forward and confessed," she says, "you thought, Well, then! We started making plans what to do with Paris when he got out. Where would he go? Where would he stay? Not a city. Not around too many people." In the letdown after the confession, she says, she got much more focussed on what she calls "the case case."

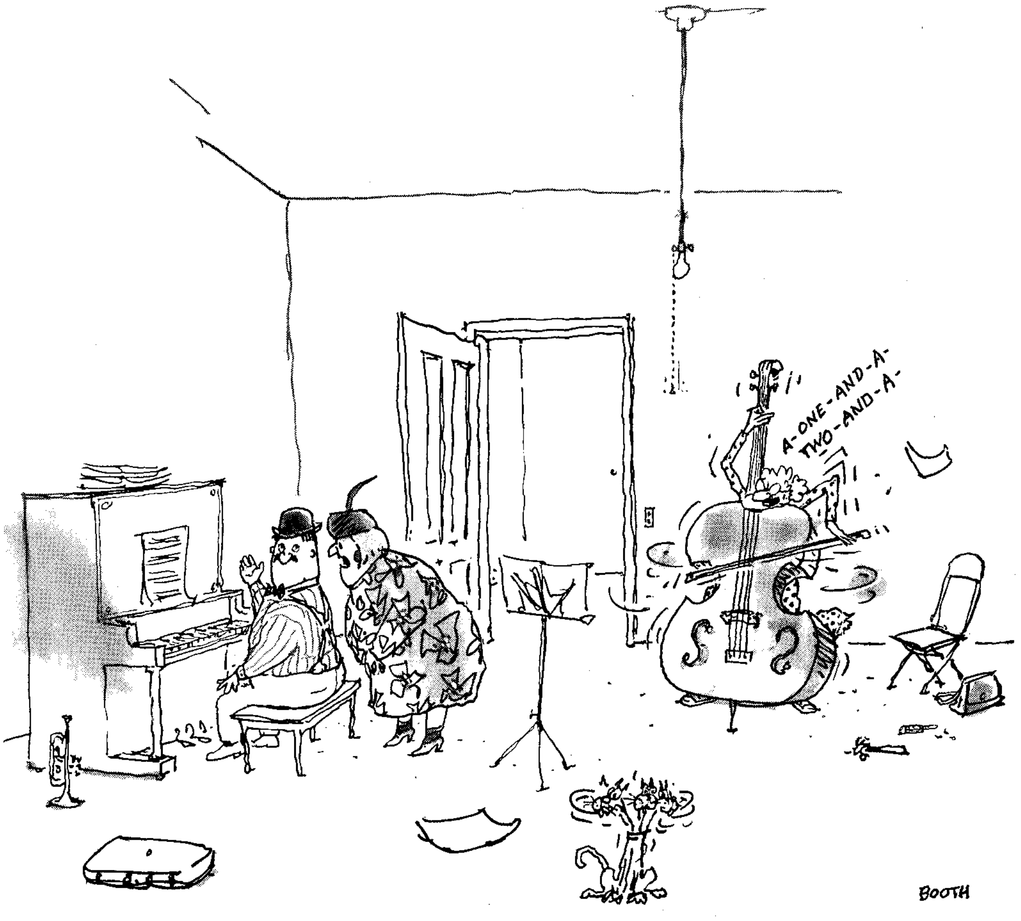
When Sproul first began corresponding with Carriger, in 1979, it wasn't his legal case that she found compelling; unlike Elsa Crumpley, she wasn't even terribly engaged by the question of whether or not he had committed the crime alleged. Barbara Sproul shares Phoebe Ellsworth's interest in letter writing. By the time Carriger came along, she had already corresponded with many prisoners through Amnesty International, including Lillian Ngoyi, the head of the women's division of the African National Congress, who died while under house arrest in Soweto, and Rudolf Battěk, who was a political prisoner in Czechoslovakia and later became a member of the Czech parliament. From those correspondences, she says, she was accustomed to "treating such folks like human beings who might be interested in the same things you're interested in and not just interested in talking about the Case."

As a board member of Amnesty in the late seventies, Sproul was in charge of a new project on the death penalty, but she had to answer Paris Carriger's initial letter by informing him that the project was focussed on lobbying rather than on individual cases. He answered that letter and, sooner or later, she found herself in correspondence. Sproul is a professor of religion at Hunter College. She had no difficulty distinguishing morally between a prisoner of conscience in Czechoslovakia and someone in Arizona who could have been fairly described as a career criminal. But she was engaged by Paris Carriger's letters. He told good stories. He was witty. He was wide-ranging: over the years it turned out that he could discuss philosophy, and he could advise Sproul's older son, Jake, about caring for horses, and he could do a long riff on how various sorts of music affected him. Particularly at the beginning, he did have a tendency toward braggadocio, but a tendency no more severe than Sproul was accustomed to encountering at Manhattan cocktail parties. All in all, he was, in Barbara Sproul's view, "a great letter writer."

She is aware that most of Carriger's "family by choice" became attached to him not simply because he had what Sam Gross has called "a very forceful, very plausible claim to being innocent" but also because of his sensibility and his writing talent. One of the religions Sproul has studied, Zoroastrianism, includes in its scriptures the notion that being boring is a deadly sin. It has occurred to her that if you assume that the family Carriger attracted helped to prolong his life or at least to sustain him while his lawyers were prolonging his life, you might say that being boring could have been for him, literally, deadly.

Sproul believes that it's possible to get people out of prison psychologically through correspondence. "To do that, you have to put yourself on the line as a person," she says. "You tell them about yourself and invite them into your life, a place they can go where they're not in prison." Barbara Sproul's life wasn't like anything that Paris Carriger had experienced. An informal woman of fifty-three with an easy laugh, she lives in a large, homey apartment on the Upper East Side, within walking distance of Hunter, with her husband, the playwright Herb Gardner, and their children—two young boys who are seen as a particular blessing for having come along relatively late in their parents' lives. Carriger, who'd never had a wife or children, has been described by those who ran across him as being more comfortable with horses and dogs than with people. He had grown up in a family where abuse was so routine that an established rite of passage for the children was to run off and take refuge with an older sibling. Sproul says that part of what connected two people in such disparate circumstances was a shared interest in reading. "I sent him books I was reading and liked," she says. "And we discussed those. I never sent him a book he couldn't read." She sent theology—her field is comparative religion—and philosophy and literature. She had someone else send science fiction.

GRADUALLY, Barbara Sproul became sort of HQ Paris. She did some banking for him when he acquired funds from the dozens of people he seemed to be writing at the same time, and she contributed some funds of her own. She acted as critic when Carriger, somehow squeezing fiction into a writing schedule that seemed to produce flurries of letters every day, began to turn out short stories. She found books and magazines relevant to any interest he took up—humpback whales, for instance, or celestial navigation. She talked regularly to his lawyers. To the extent that anyone coördinated the nonlegal aspects of Carriger's support group, she was the coördinator. And she tried to buck him up when he was down. "You've got to know that you are triumphant already," she wrote, two years after the Dunbar confession. "Nobody lives as



"Mrs. Ritterhouse is getting harmonic tones on her G-string."

successfully as you do under such horrific conditions. I get weepy if people are *rude* to me, can you imagine. And that's when I have money and power and whatever is necessary to make sure that they have no power at all over me. You are incredible to be able to define yourself so purely under such pressure. Just don't give up."

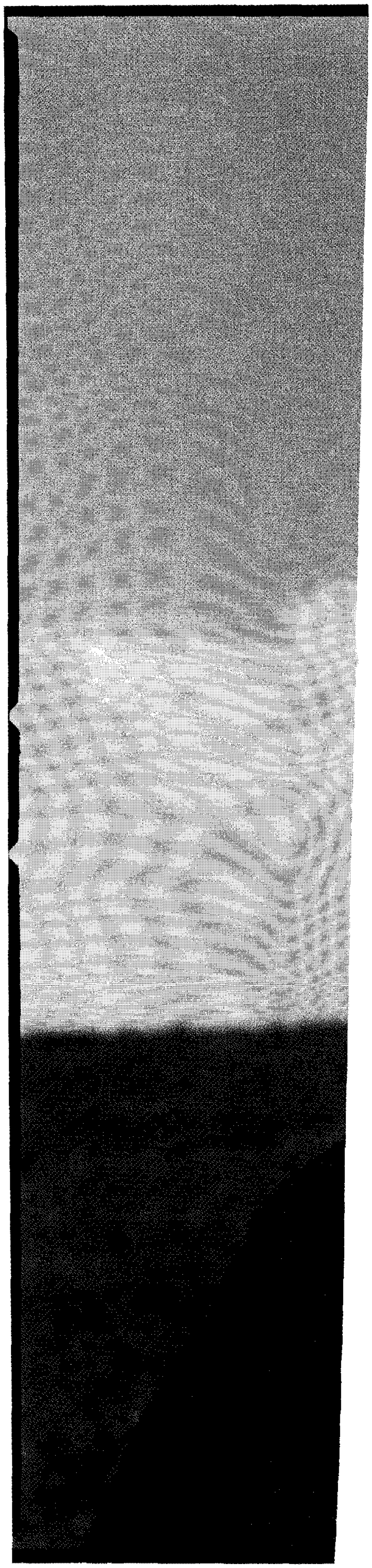
In November of 1995, her duties expanded suddenly to include intensive public relations. Carriger had been given an execution date of December 6th, and his lawyers had just about run out of ways to put it off. They thought the time had come to make as much noise as possible. Among Carriger's friends and supporters, Phoebe Ellsworth and Sam Gross helped some, but it was Barbara Sproul who had high-level contacts in the New York media world. Her list headed "Outreach for Paris" contained more than forty people she intended to reach, including anchormen and talk-show hosts and columnists. (In the midst of the furious telephoning and faxing, Sproul had to stop to explain to Jake, who was then seven, that his idea of just calling 911 and saying that Paris was innocent was not workable.) In a couple of weeks, she managed what the *Times* called "a communications blitz." The *Times* used that phrase in a front-page story on changing death-penalty defense strategies which ran a few days before the scheduled execution—a story that made prominent mention of the Paris Carriger case.

A few weeks before that, Sproul had flown out to Florence, Arizona, one weekend. "It did seem that we'd come to the end of the line," she says. If so, she wanted to sit down and talk with her friend for a while face to face. When she recalls the trip, what she can't seem to get over is that death row in Arizona was painted turquoise. And the guards were polite. It was, she says, "an oddly cheery place." The content of her first visit with Carriger, after sixteen years of correspondence, did not produce that sort of surprise. "It was pretty much just a confirmation of all the letters," she says. "If you are a letter writer, you know how intimate that connection can be over the years. So that it wasn't that I needed to see him to believe in his reality. I always thought I knew him real well through letters . . . in terms of character, almost better than I did people I could see."

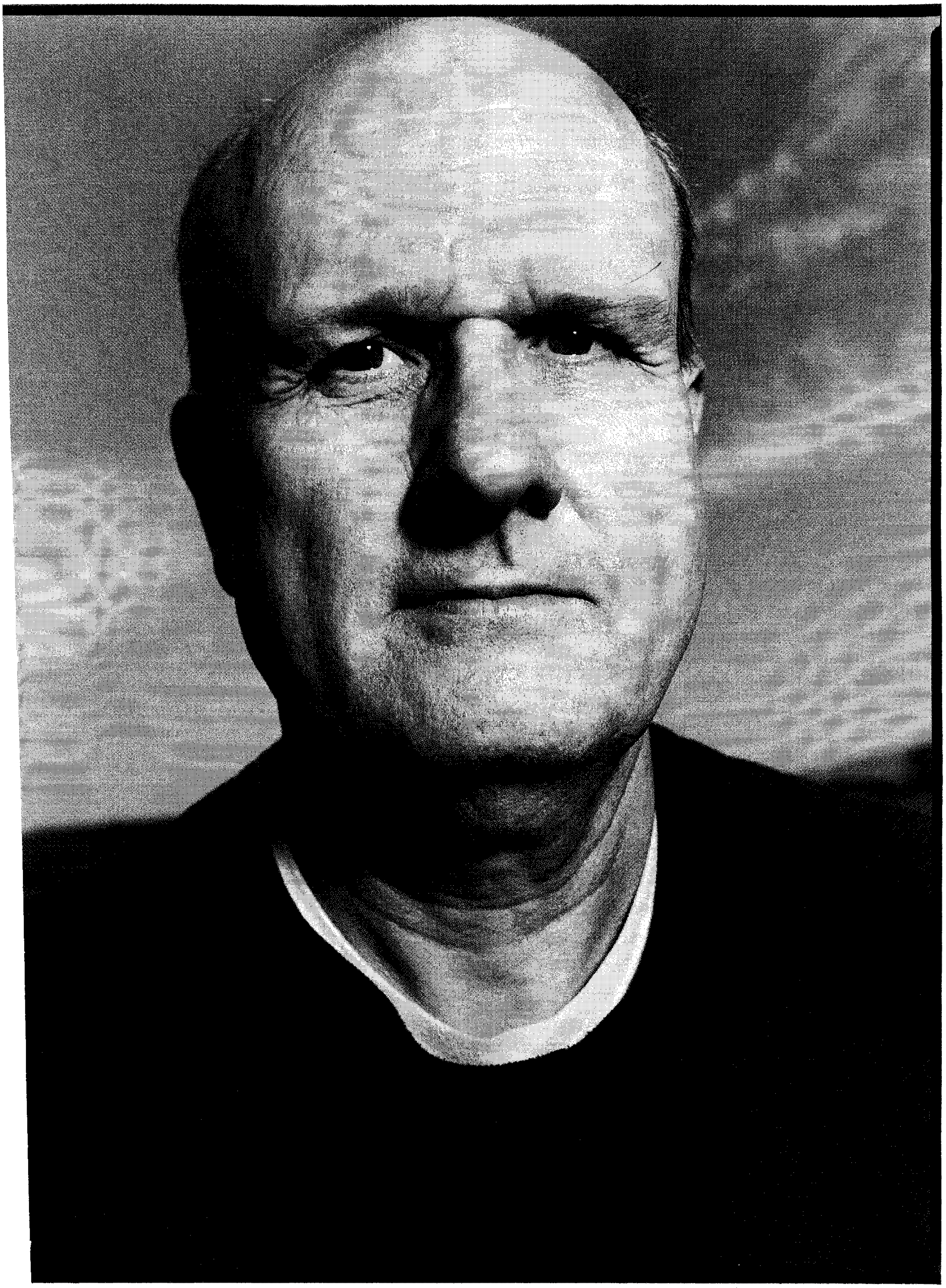
KATHERINE SOLTIS

"THE Quakers are gathering around us," Katherine Soltis wrote Carriger from Cleveland, a week or so before the December 6th date. "The Monday night group I belong to is taking this very seriously and will, as we say, hold you and the rest of us in the Light." In the same letter, Soltis reported having distributed three hundred and seventy packets of information, and she assured Carriger that she would be at the clemency hearing. In Arizona, a clemency hearing is customarily held the day before any scheduled execution. As far as Carriger's supporters could discover, the clemency board had never actually recommended clemency to a governor, and, even if this case turned out to be a first, there was virtually no chance that the governor, a strong proponent of capital punishment, would accept the recommendation. It seemed likely that, barring some last-minute intervention by a court, a trip to the clemency hearing would also include a vigil on the night of execution. As Soltis prepared for the trip to Arizona, one of the items she packed was a placard that said "No."

Fourteen years earlier, testimony that Kathy Soltis gave on the death penalty to a subcommittee of the Ohio legislature had run as an op-ed piece in the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, and Paris Carriger, who'd been sent the piece by someone he corresponded with in Indiana, had written to compliment her on her reasoning. From childhood, she has been strongly opposed to the death penalty. "It's unacceptable to me that my government should be in the business of killing someone in a premeditated, ritualized way, hidden away in the bowels of prison, usually in the dark of night, for the purpose of revenge," she says. "What they're doing has nothing to do with justice." Her opposition to capital punishment is now intertwined with her Quaker beliefs—the belief, for instance, that nobody is irredeemable. The anti-death-penalty stance traditionally taken by the Friends was part of what led her to become a Quaker in the first place, she says, and some people in her meeting believe she has what Quakers call a



In 1987, Carriger wrote Ph



'lsworth, "In a personal sense, sharing your family makes me feel very honored." Photograph by Mary Ellen Mark.

leading—an impetus to do something that God wants you to do—to oppose capital punishment. Since that 1981 op-ed piece appeared, she has been involved in other death-row cases, but only with Paris Carriger did she develop the sort of relationship that would lead them to talk of each other as adopted siblings.

Kathy Soltis is a small woman in her late forties, with a somewhat nervous manner. In Cleveland, she works for Webster's New World Dictionary. She's one of the editors who are in charge of updating and finding references for given categories of words—in her case, categories like food-and-wine terms, interjections, and technical terms in linguistics. Paris Carriger occasionally passed on to her his opinions about which new terms belonged in dictionaries. ("The word UNCOOL is reaching a bit. If that is the best we can do in an updated dictionary, perhaps there comes a time when progress is best left to others.") Actually, Carriger was willing to pass on an opinion about almost any subject—even the subject of Kathy Soltis herself. ("If you have a weakness that I would call one it is the fact that you really want to do the quote unquote 'right' thing and most of the time there is no way to be sure what it is. . . . I find that I respect your instincts, I find that I love the curious gentleness that is as much a part of your personality as your combativeness seems to be.") A dozen or so years after the correspondence began, Soltis's marriage broke up; after that, she thought of Paris Carriger, someone she'd never actually seen, as her closest male friend.

When she finally did see him, he was in a steel-mesh enclosure at the end of the room where the clemency hearing was held—a cinder-block room on the grounds of the Arizona state prison. She thought of the enclosure as a cage, and she thought that Carriger—a short, bald man—looked miserable. The clemency hearing was also the first time that Kathy Soltis and Phoebe Ellsworth and Elsa Crumpley and Barbara Sproul—the women Carriger sometimes referred to as his sisters, or simply "the group"—met one another. In the weeks leading up to the hearing, they had been in contact, and they had all arrived in Arizona with prepared statements to deliver. "Monday, they descended on Florence, those who adore Paris Carriger," a Mesa *Tribune* columnist named David Leibowitz wrote. "Let the zealots have their day. They are best ignored, like their slanted faxes to anyone with a printing press, and their wet kiss from *The New York Times,* whose Saturday front page chronicled 'Mr. Carriger's ordeal.' " In three columns on the case, Leibowitz recounted the evidence against Carriger, and quoted the prosecuting attorney as saying that he had "no doubt whatsoever" of Carriger's guilt. At the prison, though, the officials and guards at the hearing were as cordial as they might have been if the subject under discussion were a zoning variance. Members of the clemency board were equally polite to everybody. When Robert Shaw's daughter had finished telling the board by telephone from England that it was time to carry out the sentence imposed on the man convicted of murdering her father, the chairman said, before he hung up the phone, "Have a nice day."

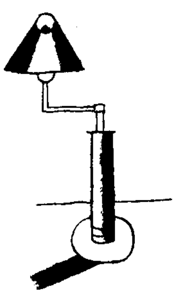
"I took him for what he was worth, but it was all in utilities."

THE subject under discussion, as it turned out, was Paris Carriger's entire life. To prepare for the clemency-hearing stage of Carriger's appeal, his lawyer, Denise Young, had recruited Jay Pultz, a death-penalty lawyer from San Francisco, whose specialty is bringing together documents and witnesses to tell a story that is designed to present the condemned man as a human being. In Carriger's case, of course, it was partly designed to present him as an innocent human being—someone of whom an academic expert on death-row claims of innocence could be brought in to say, "I know of no other inmate currently facing execution anywhere in the United States whose guilt is more questionable." But Pultz's story was much broader than just the case. It offered, for instance, a picture of Paris Carriger's childhood, which might have been described as

Dickensian if Dickens had ever been given the opportunity to collaborate with Erskine Caldwell. It detailed the abuse Carriger had endured at home and at reform school, a place then known as "the Devil's Island of Arizona." It showed Carriger as a man who had been abused or betrayed by virtually everybody he'd ever come in contact with.

Kathy Soltis was taken aback to learn that Carriger had actually shot a man to earn the eleven-year stretch that preceded the Shaw murder—somehow, she had never known that he had done anything quite that violent—but she decided that he'd paid his debt to society for that crime and had, in the years since, become "a gentle, philosophical, caring person." She had also not expected to hear Carriger relentlessly portrayed as someone impaired by psychiatric problems and even some brain damage. His lawyers had good reason to emphasize mental impairment: the Arizona *Republic's* coverage of the hearing began, "Paris Hoyt Carriger, brain-damaged and delusional, was easily victimized by a vicious psychopath who eventually framed him for murder, defense witnesses said Monday." But there was no doubt that his problems were documented and long-standing. From the time he'd ended a brief and unhappy stint in the Army, more than thirty years before, he had been diagnosed again and again as a paranoid schizophrenic. Three times, he had been found incompetent to stand trial.

"Although quite mentally disabled," one witness said, "he is highly verbal and has learned to use language in a manner that masks the content and extent of his thought disorders." This interpretation of Paris Carriger struck many of his friends at the hearing as outdated or wrong or simply silly, not to speak of irritating. (Phoebe Ellsworth later referred to one of the expert witnesses as "a twerp of the first water.") Kathy Soltis says that she was not terribly bothered by Carriger's psychiatric history, which she had heard him allude to in vague terms a year or so before ("I think I was weighing it against everything else I knew about him"). But it seemed to some people in the group that Carriger, sitting silently in his cage, was looking more and more miserable as descriptions of his delusions and grandiosity and cognitive slippage were bandied about in the presence of his friends—friends for whom his appeal, after all, had been partly his intelligence.



As it turned out, the clemency board did not have to make a recommendation about the fate of Paris Carriger. Testimony was ended by the news that the Supreme Court had declined to vacate a last-minute stay from the Ninth Circuit. Carriger had been saved from an execution date, but he was, in Jay Pultz's phrase, "traumatized, numb." Of course, he had come perilously close to being put to death. What seemed to have shaken him more, though, was the fear that his friends would abandon him. "Beside that fear," he wrote Kathy Soltis a week after the hearing, "dying is of small moment." In a letter to her the next day, he wrote, "When I hear experts spouting opinions about me, I find it easy to worry about them destroying a part of my relationship that I need to be able to survive as a person rather than the state approved vegetable of the moment."

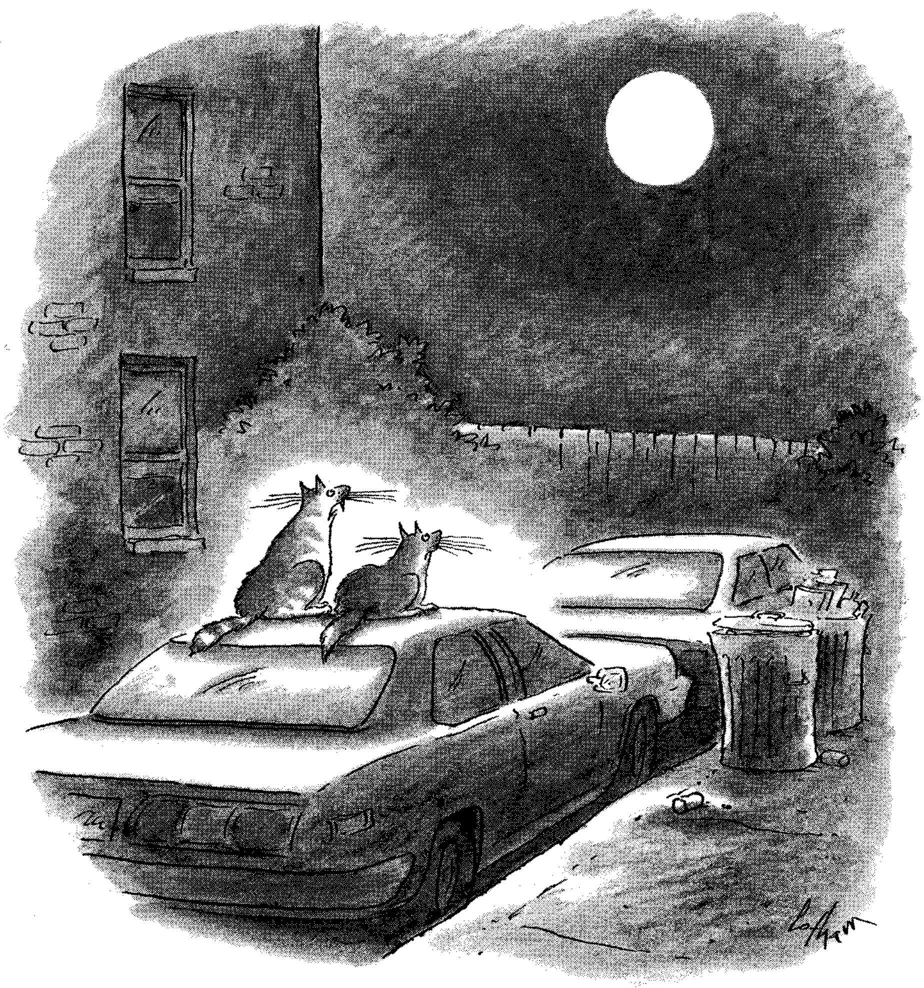
Still, in the same letter he was up to a lengthy description of the Canyon de Chelly and some strategizing about his case and a pat of reassurance to Soltis, who had worried that her statement to the clemency board hadn't been smoothly delivered. "As for the presentation and the verbal stumbling. Take it from me kid, I would rather have the image of sincere distress than the image of glib and tidy perfection," he wrote. "I liked your presentation and my only distress was my worry that perhaps you heard something about me from the doctors that made you less willing to care about me."

As it turned out, Kathy Soltis was not less willing to care about him. "Whatever I had learned didn't change the fact that we had adopted each other as siblings, and we both had an awful lot invested in this friendship," she later said. "I didn't want to lose it under any circumstances." Humiliation in front of his friends was part of what brought Carriger to a low point in morale just after he managed to avoid the date with the executioner, but his friends' support in the next months was, in the view of Jay Pultz and others, what allowed him to survive. "That's where that group came in," Pultz has said of the period that followed the clemency hearing. "They were solid and present. They allowed him to come back to life."

PARIS CARRIGER

JAY PULTZ has said, almost seriously, "I have never had a client who didn't have a grandparent in Oklahoma." Paris Carriger's father, Elmer, who moved when Paris was an infant, was from Oklahoma, and Pultz, in the course of doing research on the family, discovered a half sister there who hadn't even known she had a half brother in Arizona. Given what Pultz had found out about Elmer Carriger, someone who has been described by his son as "a bit of a weasel," it was not surprising to uncover a previously unknown offspring. Pultz is someone who has a strong faith in the documents he collects—he says that he decides where he's going to stay in a city by calling Kinko's and asking the clerk which hotel she can see out the window—and, according to the report he helped put together for the clemency hearing, "If the records are taken at face value, Elmer Carriger had three wives—in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Arizona—at the time of Paris's birth." The half sister Pultz found in Oklahoma, a retired nurse named B. J. Whitson, lives on the eastern edge of the state, in pleasant, hilly country where there always seems to be both a grazing Angus and a distant mountain in view. Although the house she and her husband live in is not large, she seems to be the sort of person who takes people in—making room, for instance, for a three-year-old autistic great-grandson who didn't seem to her to be getting proper care. Last January, she took in her half brother, Paris Carriger, whose release she had been working for ever since she was made aware of his existence. Carriger now lives in a mobile home parked next to the house—a sort of benign version of his living arrangements in a van next to Robert Dunbar's house the last time he was a free man, nearly twenty-one years ago.

The fact that he is once again a free man still astonishes just about everyone familiar with the case. As it turned out, the doubts that he and his lawyers raised about his guilt finally did him some good. In a 1995 case called Schlup v.



"Have you ever wondered what would happen if a giant hair ball were to slam into the earth?"

• •

Delo, the Supreme Court decided that a strong argument for innocence could open the door to consideration of issues that had been inadmissible for procedural reasons. Two years later, an eleven-judge panel in the Ninth Circuit, applying the Schlup decision to consider the prosecution's failure to reveal information that could have undermined Robert Dunbar's credibility, ruled that Paris Carriger had not received a fair trial.

Once the Supreme Court decided to let that decision stand, the State of Arizona announced that it intended to proceed with a retrial. Carriger's lawyers had reason to believe, though, that the state would be willing to explore alternatives. There was no serious political pressure for a retrial—the victim had not been, say, a police officer but someone who didn't even have family still living in the state—and the intervening years had, of course, uncovered any number of problems with the prosecution's case. For a while, though, Carriger's supporters were afraid that he'd seek a retrial as a way to win complete exoneration—a course they all discouraged. "Principles are very expensive," Barbara Sproul has said. "They're for people richer, financially and psychologically, than Paris." Eventually, Carriger agreed. He entered a plea of nolo contendere to robbery and murder in return for a sentence of what amounted to the time he'd served. "I said I didn't care what was on the paper as long as it wasn't child molestation, as long as I went loose," he said later. "Quite frankly, I had done all the time I wanted to do."

PARIS CARRIGER is fifty-four years old now—a pudgy man who doesn't look at all dangerous. He wears sweat clothes, having decided not to invest in any apparel beyond that until he has a better idea of what size he'll be once he's become accustomed to eating non-prison food and getting a reasonable amount of exercise. There were exercise periods on death row, of course, but he says that he customarily spent them at his typewriter, producing letters. Before he went into prison for the Shaw murder, he hadn't been much of a letter writer—he estimates a lifetime total of a couple of dozen—but on death row his production was so relentless that a couple of dozen letters sounds like something he might consider a bit of finger-loosening before the day's real work began. The letter writing hadn't started right away. "The first two years I was on the row, I'm absolutely certain I was crazy," he now says. "I had a rap that was like a loop on tape. It consisted of approximately four hundred words." Apparently, most of the words were about his case.

At that point, Carriger was without money or friends or connections. He speaks of that condition as an advantage for a prisoner in one way—it meant that the authorities didn't have what he calls a handle on him, the power to take away something he dreaded losing—but it was not, of course, an advantage in making contact with the outside world. For a start, he didn't know whom to write. "I didn't know what door I wanted open, but I knew doors open," he now says. "What I was looking for was the reins of power." At first, he wrote to reporters and to people in anti-death-penalty groups. After a while, he began writing people who had appeared on "The MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour" as experts on one thing or another. Eventually, he graduated from a typewriter to a Smith Corona word processor that permitted him to send the same letter to a number of people. (When Sasha Gross was about twelve, he gave her one identical to his.) He says that by the time he was released he had on his word processor's disk a personal mailing list of more than twenty-six hundred names. Long before that, though, his efforts had become focussed: "Build a useful network and actually make it do something except just feel good."

"Once I figured out what it was that I was doing, I went right out there and went at it, like it was business," Carriger says. The business required an income;

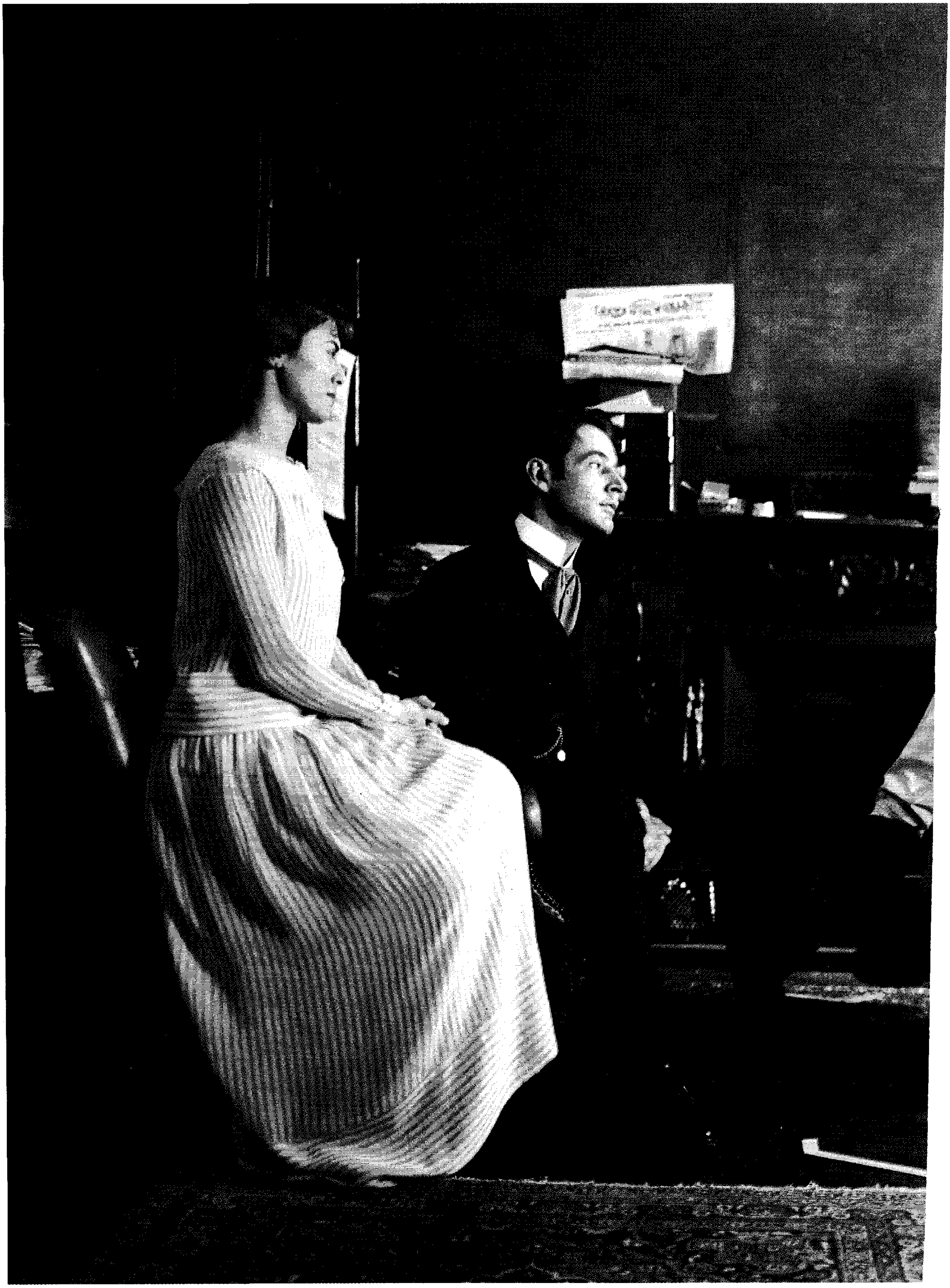
he had expenses like postage and office supplies, not to speak of the occasional gift word processor. He says he got regular donations from a number of supporters and, when cash-flow problems arose, would sometimes sell a drawing to the collectors he calls "the ghouls"—people who are attracted to art work signed by convicted murderers awaiting execution. He pictured his network as being arranged in half a dozen or so concentric circles. On the outer rim were many people who might have once sent him a few stamps or an occasional letter of support. The inner circle consisted of the people he could count on to prod lawyers or replace a broken typewriter, the people whose willingness to speak out on his behalf he thought of as a shield against mistreatment in prison. Over the years, membership in the inner circle changed from time to time, of course, but eventually it coalesced into Phoebe Ellsworth and Elsa Crumpley and Kathy Soltis and Barbara Sproul—the group.

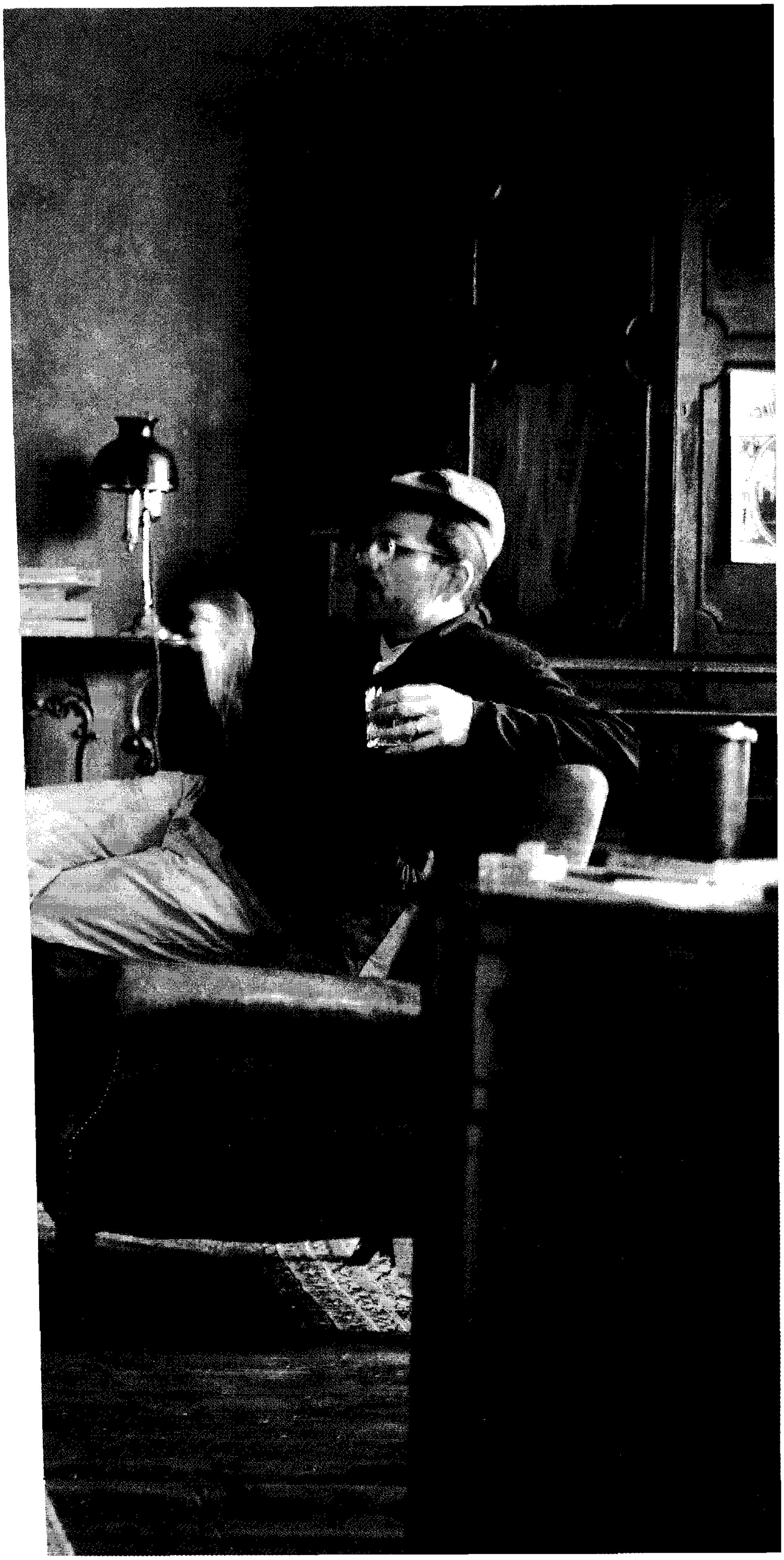
In most cases, attracting members of the group to his side had involved a sort of courtship. He made notations on his calendar of when he should be writing a letter. He didn't say much about his case, having come to realize that "if you've only got one note on the bugle you become damned boring in a hurry." He was careful not to ask for anything too soon. His description of employing whatever approach he thought would be appealing is reminiscent of Phoebe Ellsworth's talking about levels of scam. "Most of them were aware that at least some of it at the start was game time," he says. "I mean, there was none of these people that walked in with their eyes closed. Quite frankly, I would have no use for somebody who was that ignorant. I expect people to have motives. I see no reason why they shouldn't have motives. Because we've all got to figure out how to get along in the world."

The group gave Carriger something beyond funds and logistical support and morale boosting and protection: because of them, he didn't feel as if he exactly lived on death row. "My head was off yonder," he says. He kept the members of the group separated, partly, he says, "because I'm paranoid—I didn't like the thought of them talking about me." His past had taught him to keep people at a distance. ("I don't believe in trust till you have to, and generally only as much as you need to.") Gradually, though, he began to exchange confidences with people in the inner circle. "You've got to give people something to look at without necessarily letting them in the door," he says. "I would open the door in tiny ways. . . . It surprised the hell out of me when I discovered that it was possible to deal with people and not let 'em scare the shit out of you."

The group also seemed central in giving him a different sense of himself. There he was, after all, accepted as a friend by respectable people, a couple of whom even had Ph.D.s. That was one reason the clemency hearing had been such a painful experience for him. Also, he was suffering from shingles and a migraine that day and, in his words, was "psychologically screwed to the wall." He had particularly hated the testimony of one psychiatrist. "The guy said I had the brains of a box of rice," he recalls. "I was deeply offended by that for the longest time. The one and only thing I had that distinguished me from any other inmate—at least in my opinion—was the fact that I was at least able to contemplate my situation and most of them couldn't premeditate breakfast." He says that he cried for fifteen hours after the clemency hearing—not so much because he had been embarrassed in front of his friends but because of the realization that he had friends who would come to Arizona to stand with him. "It was the first time I had ever accepted the idea that I was worth something just because I was me," he says. He realized, he says now, that on death row he had somehow managed to build himself a life—and that life, he thought, finally gave the system a handle on him. "All of a sudden, I'm like all the other

"My people will have sex with your people."





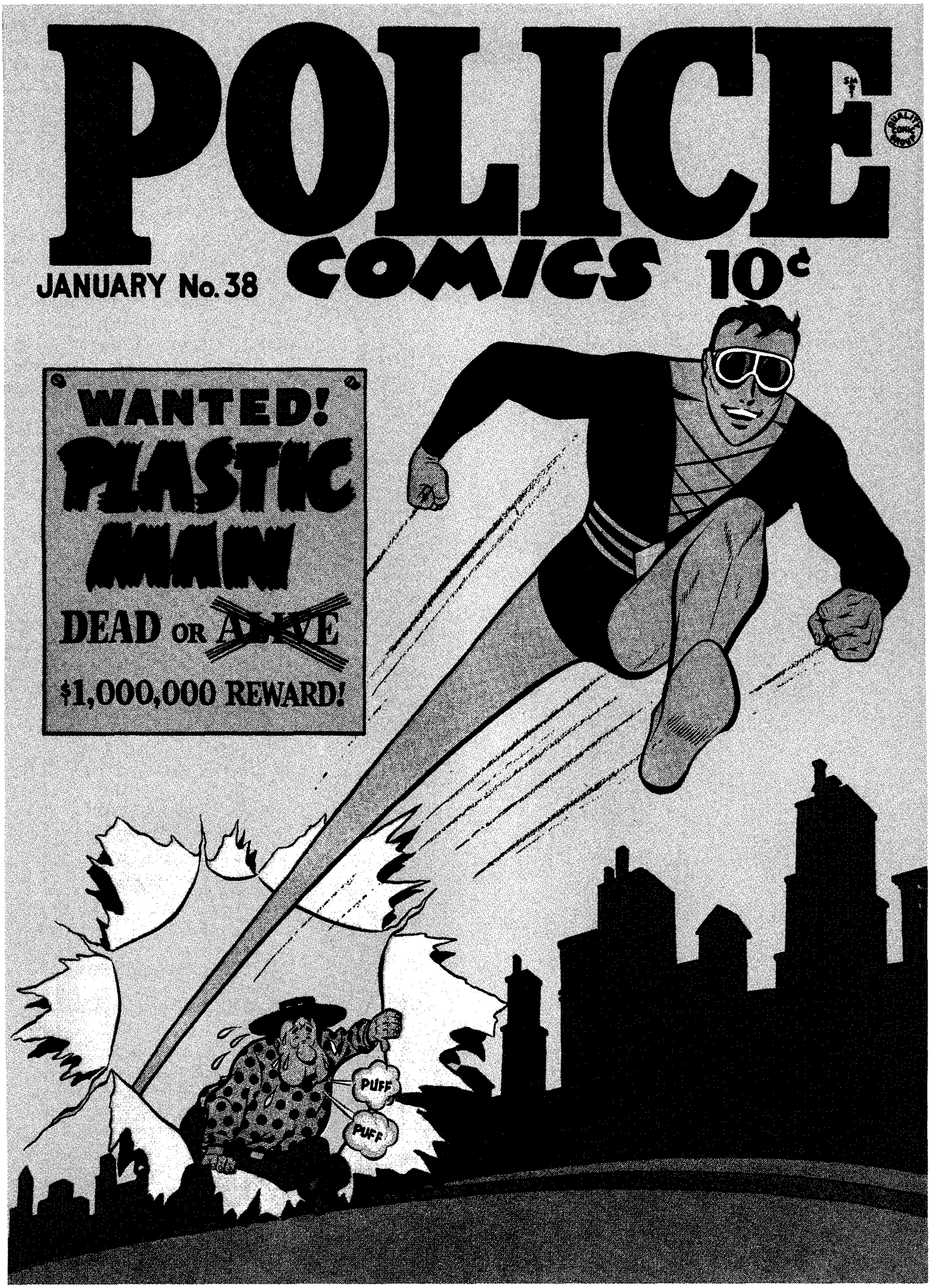
poor schmucks in the world," he says. "I've got something to lose."

Carriger plans to ask people in the group down to Oklahoma, one at a time, when he's feeling a bit stronger. He's also hoping to figure out a way to get some animals on the place. He seems acutely aware of the limited job opportunities available to a fifty-four-year-old felon who finds it difficult to be in the midst of large groups of people for very long. He's hoping that there is something he can do in the anti-death-penalty movement, working by modem rather than in an office. Gary E. Schwartz, a University of Arizona psychology professor who became passionately involved in Carriger's case shortly before the clemency hearing, has plans for something called the Paris Carriger Project, which would do research into humane alternatives to the present criminal-justice system and would presumably have a role for Paris Carriger himself. The letters and phone calls he receives from the group now tend to be about how they can help him make the adjustment to being a free man. It has not been lost on Paris Carriger that one difference between now and the last time he got out of prison is that this time he has friends. ♦

WINSLOW'S HONOR

In the British playwright Terence Rattigan's touching 1946 play, "The Winslow Boy," based on a 1910 court case, the family of a young man who has been expelled from a naval college makes tremendous financial and emotional sacrifices in order to prove his innocence on charges of theft. This month, the drama gets its second screen treatment (the first, filmed in 1948 by Anthony Asquith, starred Cedric Hardwicke, Robert Donat, and Margaret Leighton), in an immaculate and unsentimental adaptation written and directed by David Mamet (far right). In addition to Nigel Hawthorne, who stars as the family patriarch, the new film features Rebecca Pidgeon (left) as his cool suffragette daughter and the dashing Jeremy Northam (center) as the celebrated barrister who aims to defend the family's honor.

Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe


POLICE
COMICS
JANUARY No. 38
10¢
WANTED!
PLASTIC
MAN
DEAD OR ~~ALIVE~~
$1,000,000 REWARD!
PUFF
PUFF

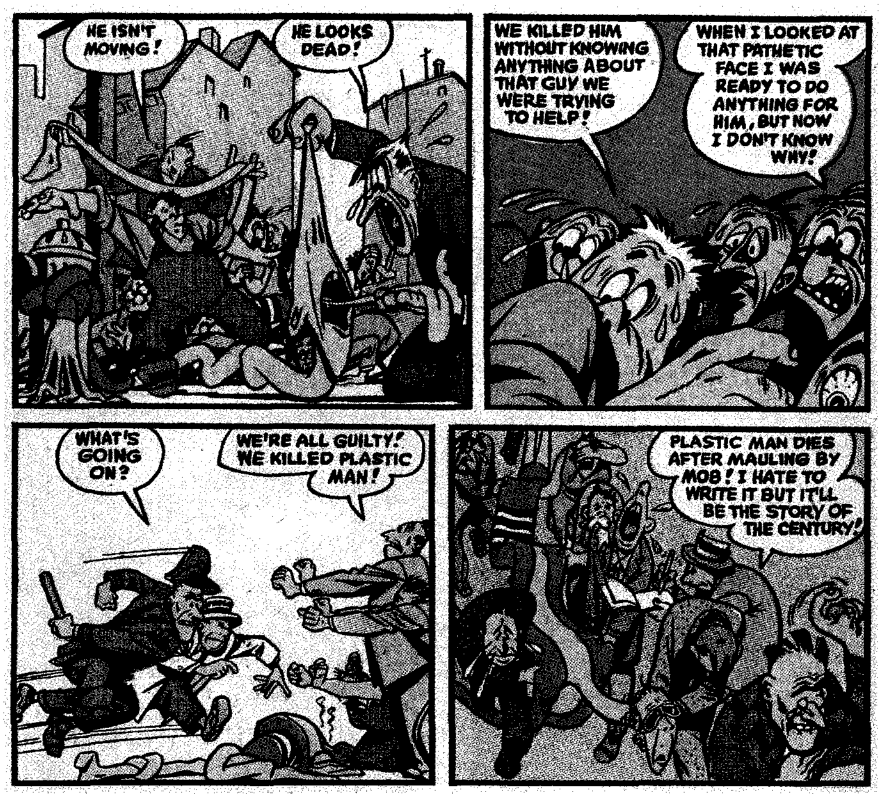
More frantic than "The Mask," and less self-conscious than "Zelig," "Plastic Man" literally embodied the comic-book form.

COMIX 101

FORMS STRETCHED TO THEIR LIMITS

What kind of person could have dreamed up Plastic Man?

BY ART SPIEGELMAN


HE ISN'T MOVING!
HE LOOKS DEAD!
WE KILLED HIM WITHOUT KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT THAT GUY WE WERE TRYING TO HELP!
WHEN I LOOKED AT THAT PATHETIC FACE I WAS READY TO DO ANYTHING FOR HIM, BUT NOW I DON'T KNOW WHY!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
WE'RE ALL GUILTY! WE KILLED PLASTIC MAN!
PLASTIC MAN DIES AFTER MAULING BY MOB! I HATE TO WRITE IT BUT IT'LL BE THE STORY OF THE CENTURY!

POLICE COMICS #38 1945; PLASTIC MAN # 20 1949 PP. 76-81 © DC COMICS

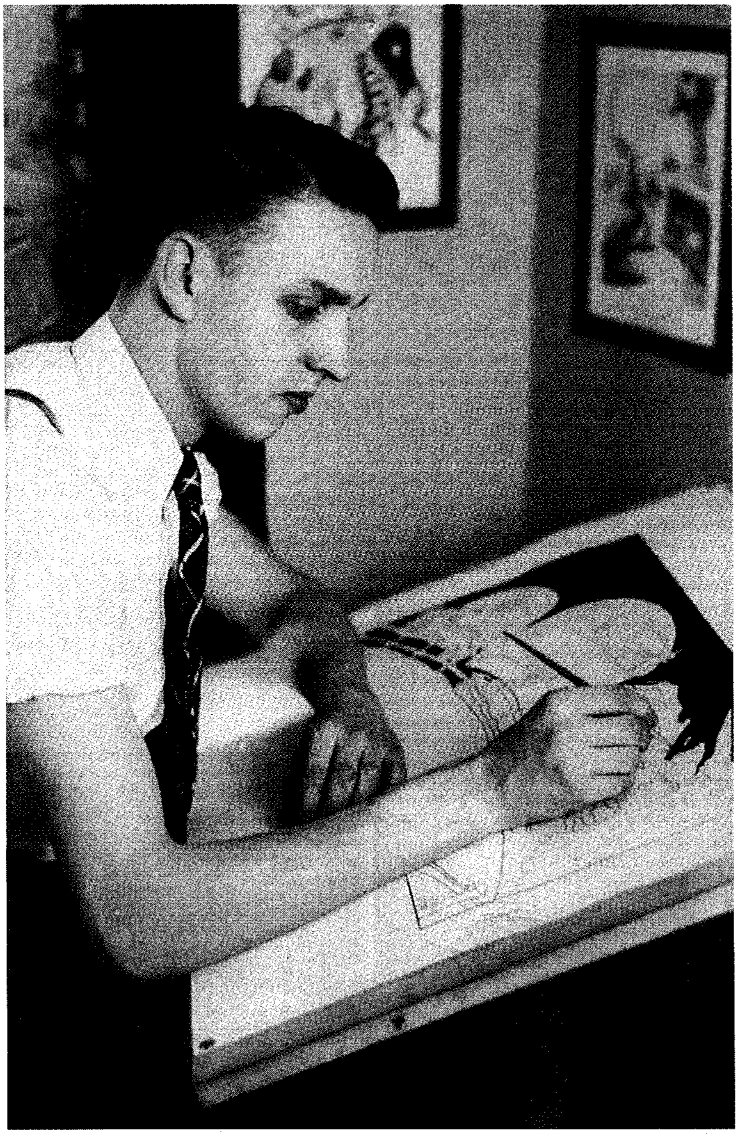
DISGUISED as a red, black, and yellow throw rug, our hero cocks one ear up to listen in on two hoods huddled at the table that rests on him. In the next panel he literally hangs out at an art museum, above a label that says "Abstract," his body now distorted into a red, black, and yellow bebop-Cubist composition, in order to eavesdrop on two cheap gunsels out gallery-hopping. And in the panel after that two molls gossip from tenement windows across an alley while our protean hero continues his stakeout camouflaged as a red, black, and yellow line of laundry flapping between them.

This manic spritz of images appeared in a 1950 issue of "Plastic Man," one of the last issues written and drawn by Jack Cole, a tragically short-lived comic-book giant. "Plastic Man" can be found mainly in those plastic bags collectors use to stash their rare, slow-burning forest fires of newsprint, although DC Comics has at last published "The Plastic Man Archives, Volume 1," which at least reprints the first twenty "Plastic Man" stories, published between 1941 and 1943, when the developing artist was just beginning to stretch. (Incidentally, the reproduction in this de-luxe, $49.95 hardcover stinks—or maybe it simply doesn't stink enough, managing somehow to look both blurry and shrill. Anyone with a spare twenty-six thousand four hundred and fifty dollars should consider seeking out near-mint copies of the original pulp-paper comic books.) I'm embarrassed to confess to being in love with a superhero comic, but Jack Cole's "Plastic Man" belongs high on any adult's How to Avoid Prozac list, up there with the best of S. J. Perelman, Laurel and Hardy, Damon Runyon, Tex Avery, and the Marx Brothers. Cole's comics have helped me feel reconciled to the misleading word "comic," which often keeps my medium of choice from getting any respect.

Many otherwise literate people, even those who have long since crossed the high-low divide and welcomed comic strips like "Krazy Kat" and "Little Nemo" into the canon of twentieth-century cultural achievement—right up there next to Picasso's paintings and Joyce's novels—remain predisposed against comic *books.* Of course, most comic books really *are* junk, just as our parents said, but so is most painting and literature. The lowly comic book has a lot of strikes against it, not least a residual public distaste left over from Senator Kefauver's nineteen-fifties crime hearings, which scapegoated the whole medium as a species of pornography for tots. The hearings forced a draconian "self-regulating" Comics Code Authority on the publishers; the edict stamped out the reckless excesses of the crime, war, and horror comics (categories that tended to appeal to an older audience of G.I.s and other adults) and left lobotomized superheroes and innocuous funny animals as virtually the only survivors on the newsstands. We've committed some of our most censorious follies in the guise of protecting our children.

It's a tribute to the medium's appeal that the comic book has bounced back from the grave several times in its history, though the industry has never been as close to death as now. Near-suicidal publishing and marketing decisions—for example, aiming at a narrow collectors' market rather than reaching out to mainstream audiences—have left the industry in a depressed state. Television almost killed what remained of comics in the mid-fifties; now new computer-generated special-effects technologies have robbed comics of even their near-monopoly on primal visual fantasy. Comic books must reposition themselves—possibly as Art—in order to survive as anything more than part of the feeder system for Hollywood. Otherwise, like vaudeville, they will vanish.

Art? It now seems natural to see Orson Welles's "Touch of Evil" or a Howard Hawks Western at MOMA, but a generation of aestheticians like Manny Farber had to show people how to see movies for such programming to become plausible. In a landmark 1962 essay in *Film Culture*, Farber looked at B movies with a painter's eyes and championed the neglected genre films he loved. He contrasted "the idea of art as an expensive hunk of well-regulated area . . . shrieking with preciosity, fame, ambition" with art made "where the spotlight of culture is nowhere in evidence, so that the craftsman can be ornery, wasteful, stubbornly self-involved, doing go-for-broke art and not caring what comes of it." This he called a "termite-tapeworm-fungus-moss art . . . that goes always forward, eating its own boundaries and likely as not leaves nothing in its path other than signs of eager, industrious unkempt activity." The comic-book form has always swarmed with termites, never more so than in the Golden Age, which collectors date from the spring of 1938, when Superman first turned the ephemeral periodicals into a major fad, until the devastation brought by the Comics Code, in late 1954. It was a time when comics always travelled below critical radar and offered a direct gateway into the unrestrained dream life of their creators—lurid, violent, funny, and sometimes sublime.



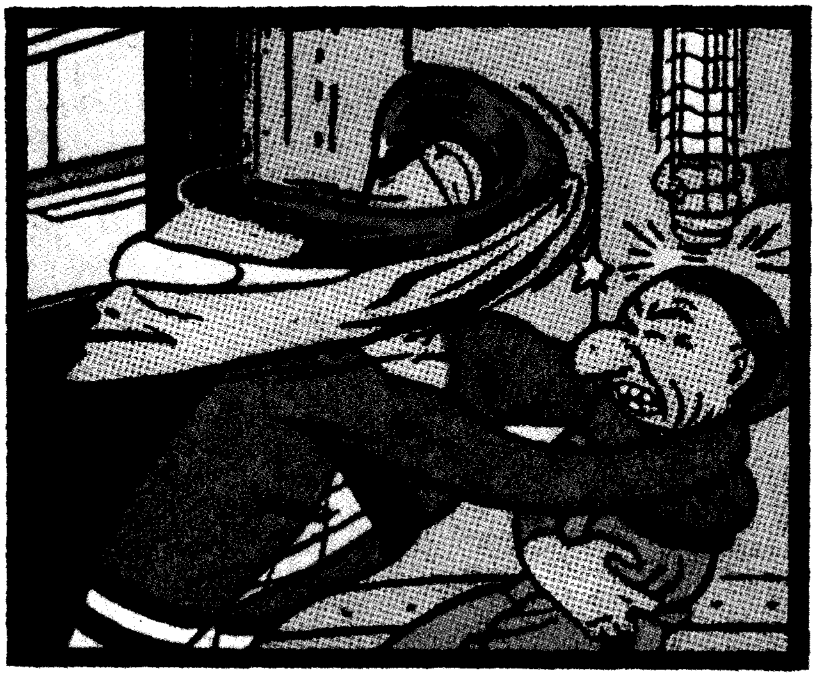
Jack Cole working in his home studio in 1938.

JACK COLE, whose comic-book career started a year before that Golden Age and ended precisely with it, was born in December, 1914, in the small coal-mining and industrial town of New Castle, in western Pennsylvania. His father, a Methodist Sunday-school teacher for twenty years, owned a drygoods store and was a popular local performer, playing the bones in King Cole's Corn Crackers; his mother had been a grade-school teacher. Jack, the third of six children, was introspective, imaginative, high-spirited, and graced with a pronounced sense of humor. A childhood passion for newspaper strips like Elzie Segar's "Thimble Theater" (featuring Popeye), George McManus's "Bringing Up Father," and Rube Goldberg's "Boob McNutt" blossomed into a lifelong desire to draw a syndicated strip of his own. His formal art training, beyond copying his favorites to crack their physiognomic code, consisted of mail-order lessons from the Landon School of Cartooning. When he was fifteen, he secretly saved up his school-lunch money to pay for the course, smuggling sandwiches from home in the hollowed-out pages of a book. Two years later, he again proved his strength of character by bicycling alone to Los Angeles and back, a seven-thousand-mile adventure that he later recounted in his first sale, an illustrated feature for *Boy's Life*.

After graduating from high school, Cole eloped with his childhood sweetheart, Dorothy Mahoney. Drawing cartoons at night and working at the local American Can factory by day, he remained in his parents' home until his mother found out about the secret marriage and suggested that he live with his wife. Dick Cole, his youngest brother, still remembers the Pop-Art-before-its-time furniture Jack playfully improvised out of printed tin sheets brought home from his job. American Can, however, clearly didn't offer him the creative outlet he was searching for, and in 1936, at the age of twenty-two, he quit. Borrowing five hundred dollars from family friends and local merchants, he moved to Greenwich Village with Dorothy to seek his fortune as a cartoonist. In a dutiful letter that he sent home after settling in, he put a positive spin on his career prospects, praising Dorothy's steadfastness and reassuring his parents that he hadn't been corrupted by the big city:

> Every kid wants to grow up to be as good as his parents, and I, being no exception have about as high a goal as could be possible to strive for. Have tried to do things as you would do them, but unfortunately I am ruled by my heart rather than my head, and sometimes slip up. (or rather, many times) I have never told you this before, but in case you are interested, I have never taken a drink of beer or liquer yet and never mean to—don't smoke—cuss some but have never used HIS name in a vain expression.

Though he eventually smoked, drank moderately, and possibly even took God's name in vain, Cole was always conscientious. In time, he paid his debts to the New Castle folk who sponsored him, although in his first year of trying to break into magazines and newspapers he had whittled his stake down to five cents. According to the comics historian Ron Goulart—whose brief but invaluable "Focus on Jack Cole" (Fantagraphics; 1986) is the closest the cartoonist has come to having a biography—Cole found himself working for about twenty dollars a week in a factory again: in Harry "A" Chesler's comic-book "sweatshop," at Fifth Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street, set up to provide new material for publishers unable to find any newspaper strips worth reprinting. The first ten-cent comic book, "Famous Funnies," published in 1934, consisted of reduced-scale color reprints of "Mutt and Jeff," "The Bungle Family," and other popular syndicated features; green-kid cartoonists worked elbow to elbow with old pulp illustrators, down-on-their-luck painters, and other has-beens and never-wases to pioneer a new art form at cut rates that could compete with the low-priced syndicate retreads. Marshall McLuhan has written that every new medium cannibalizes the content of the medium that preceded it (the movies, for example, were once called "photoplays"), and the comic book bears this idea out: pale imitations of "Dick Tracy" and "Mandrake the Magician" were the anemic norm until 1938, when the first issue of Action Comics presented a caped *Übermensch* who fought for Truth, Justice, and the American Way—a crack-brained idea by two Jewish kids from Cleveland that really made the new medium fly. *Action!* The title nails the basic appeal of the new four-color heroes: Crimson Avengers, Purple Zombies, Green Masks, Blue Beetles, Blue Bolts, Blue Streaks, White Streaks, and Silver Streaks started zipping through the sky, hitting the newsstands and one another.



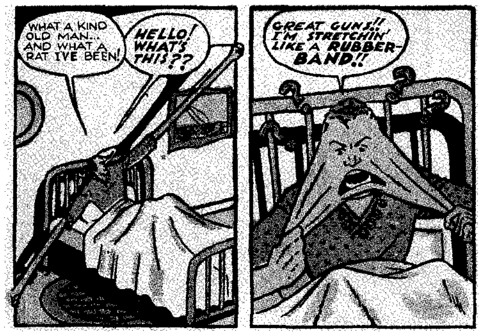
COURTESY RICHARD COLE; PLASTIC MAN #17 1949

Cole thrived, first in the Chesler shop and then as a freelancer, working against tight deadlines and learning in print how to take advantage of the flexible panel layouts and dynamic pages that these books demanded. He was an "all-around man," writing as well as drawing, even lettering and sometimes coloring his own material. He started out doing screwball filler pages and then graduated to the longer and more lucrative "straight" stuff, though even his most illustrative work happily betrayed his roots in loopy-doodle cartooning. His early straight work was crazily bent: "Mantoka" (a supernaturally empowered Native American medicine man who takes revenge on evil Caucasians), "The Comet" (whose disintegrating rays shoot out of his eyes whenever he crosses them to melt down bad guys), and, for Silver Streak Comics, "The Claw" (the ultimate Yellow Peril, a fanged Asian warlord who can get taller than King Kong when aroused) all displayed a feverish imagination, verve, and a cheerful streak of perverse violence.

By the end of 1940, Cole had begun working for Quality Comics, Everett (Busy) Arnold's newly launched line of publications. Quality became home base for the rest of Cole's comic-book career. The feel and look of the Quality Comics house style had been established by Will Eisner, creator of "The Spirit," whose work was to have a major influence on Cole. Eisner, who is now in his eighties and still doing significant comics, had studied painting and hoped to become a theatrical set designer; he was more culturally sophisticated than Cole, who had been shaped mainly by pulps, movies, comic strips, and the other early comic books—which were mostly influenced by more of the same. Cole's first sustained work for Quality was "Midnight," a feature intended by the pragmatic Arnold as a clone of "The Spirit"—just in case Eisner, who was in the unique position of owning his own character, were to be drafted and die or otherwise leave Quality. Cole learned important lessons in narrative and structural coherence from this apprenticeship, and brought his singular sense of humor and fantasy to the project.

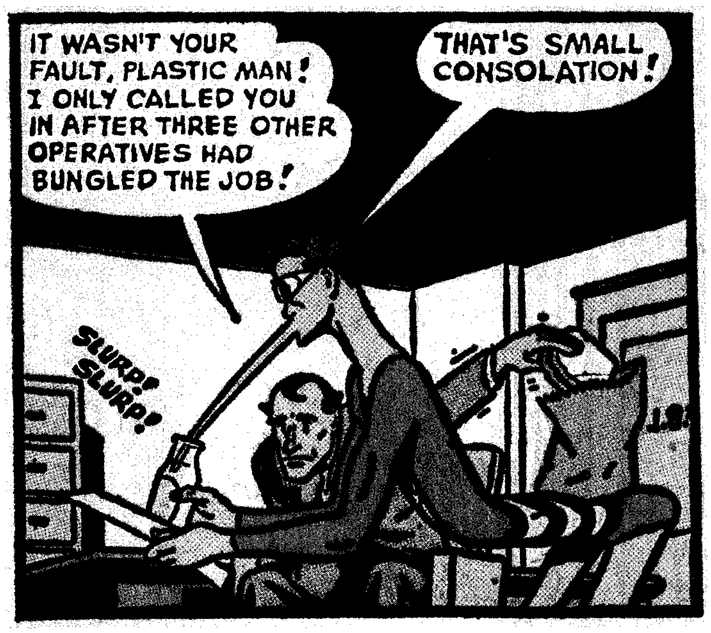
A few months after "Midnight" came "Plastic Man," starting as a minor feature in Police Comics but soon to become the star of that anthology. Inspired by sideshow freaks, Cole planned to call the character the India Rubber Man. Arnold, however, astutely suggested that it might be bouncier to name him after the miracle substance that was reshaping the modern world. In 1943, when Plastic Man expanded into his own book, Cole explained the morphing hero to new readers: "If you should see a man standing on the street and reaching into the top window of a sky-scraper . . . that's not astigmatism—it's Plastic Man! . . . If you happen upon a gent all bent up like a pretzel . . . don't dunk him . . . it's Plastic Man! All this and bouncing too, you'll see when the rubber man and his pal Woozy Winks gamble their lives in—The Game of Death."

PLASTIC MAN wore a V-necked red rubber leotard accessorized by a wide black-and-yellow striped belt and very cool tinted goggles. He started life as Eel O'Brian, a lowlife gangster accidentally doused by some unnamed acid while committing a robbery. He was saved by a reclusive order of monks who recognized that his villainy was the result of an unhappy childhood. They nursed him back to health and in a memorable couple of panels he discovered his gift:


WHAT A KIND OLD MAN.. AND WHAT A RAT I'VE BEEN!
HELLO! WHAT'S THIS??
GREAT GUNS!! I'M STRETCHIN' LIKE A RUBBER-BAND!!

The acid bath had given him the ability to violate the laws of physics; the monks gave him the will to defend the laws of men, first as part of the police force and later as a special agent for the F.B.I. His F.B.I. chief, sporting one of the most peculiar comb-overs in comics, was the authority figure in Plastic Man's tiny nuclear family. Nobody knew that Plastic Man and the gangster Eel O'Brian were the same person. His secret identity—as a public enemy he himself was supposed to capture—was too limiting a concept for a hero who could be literally anything he wanted to be. Superman and the tribe that grew from that template have a mere two identities: they're binary. Plas, as his friends called him, was multiphrenic and illimitable, and soon forgot about being Eel O'Brian.

It says something about Cole's superego, if not his superhero, that he often cast reformed villains as his principals. Woozy Winks, Plastic Man's Robin, was hardly a Boy Wonder. He entered the series as a miscreant, the Man Who Can't Be Harmed, having chosen a life of crime on the basis of a coin toss. Several issues later his powers diminished, so that he became the Man Whom Nature Protects (Sometimes), and he eventually settled in as an all too mortal bungler, a skirt-chaser, and an occasional pickpocket. He was a slovenly, scrotum-cheeked rube in a straw hat and green polka-dot shirt who looked a bit like Alfred Hitchcock. Providing a meatball-shaped counterweight to Plastic Man's spaghetti, his direct forebear was Popeye's pal Wimpy. In a more "straight" comic-book reality, Woozy would have provided comic relief.


IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, PLASTIC MAN! I ONLY CALLED YOU IN AFTER THREE OTHER OPERATIVES HAD BUNGLED THE JOB!
THAT'S SMALL CONSOLATION!
SLURP! SLURP!
J.S.

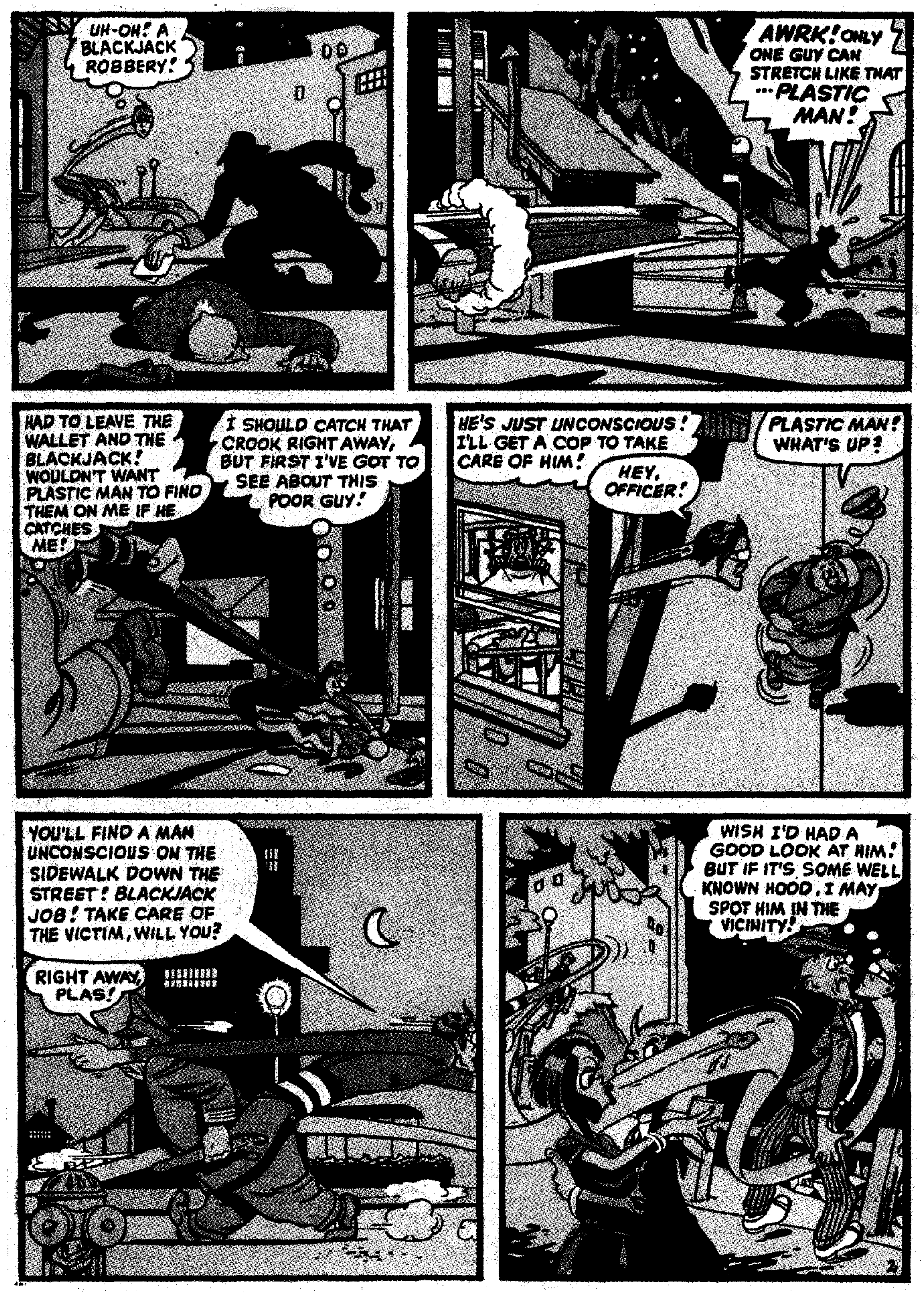
Plastic Man never stretches exactly the same way twice.

Naturally enough, Cole resembled both his leads: like Woozy, he was soft-bodied, somewhat dishevelled, and no city slicker; like Plastic Man, he was tall, pointy-nosed, and "very likable . . . a straight arrow—sort of a Boy Scout in some ways," as Gill Fox, Cole's close friend and his editor at Quality, described him to me.

Cartoonists "become" each character in their comics, acting out every gesture and expression; it's in this sense that Cole most resembles Plastic Man—as the Spirit of Cartooning. Cole successfully performed the one magic act at the heart of the craft: believing so profoundly in the reality of the world conjured up with lines on paper that, against the odds, the marks gain enough authority to become a real world for the reader. Cole's world teems with invention, gags, and an amazing number of hyperactive characters tucked into every nook and cranny of a panel. Plastic Man never stretches exactly the same way twice. While Cole's work is often overloaded with ideas, the drawing is never overwrought; the art displays a Midwesterner's laconic mastery. What remains most remarkable is his ability to be so fully present in his comic-book work from moment to moment, always following his lines of thought with the same curiosity the reader might have—as astonished as any reader by where they take him.

If the going rate for pictures is still only a thousand words per, most "Plastic Man" panels are worth at least two or three pictures. Each panel seems to swallow several separate instants of time whole, as if the page were made up of small screens with different, though related, films whizzing by at forty-eight frames a second. Cole's is an amphetamine-riddled art: Tex Avery on speed! And it's not just Plastic Man who bounces and twists; any one of Cole's incidental figures would seem as kinetic as Plastic Man if it were transplanted into someone else's comic book. Each page is intuitively visualized to form a coherent whole, even though the individual panels form a narrative flood of run-on sentences that breathlessly jump from one page to the next. The art ricochets like a racquetball slammed full force in a closet. Your eye, however, is guided as if it were a skillfully controlled pinball, often by Plastic Man himself acting as a compositional device. His distended body is an arrow pointing out the sights as it hurtles through time. In just a single panel, our hero chases along a footpath in a park, trailing a mugger. Running from the rear of the picture, Plastic Man's S-curved body echoes the path itself as he loops around one pedestrian in the distance and extends between two lovers about to kiss—lipstick traces are on his elongated neck as he passes them—to swoop up between an old man's legs like an enormous penis wearing sunglasses and stare into his startled face. Plastic Man had all the crackling intensity of the life force transferred to paper. Pulpier than James Cameron's Terminator, more frantic than Jim Carrey in "The Mask," and less self-conscious than Woody Allen's "Zelig," "Plastic Man" literally *embodied* the comic-book form: its exuberant energy, its flexibility, its boyishness, and its only partially sublimated sexuality. Cole's infinitely malleable hero, Clinton-like in his ability to change shape and squeeze through tiny loopholes, just oozed sex. It was never made explicit—the idea of a hard-core version of "Plastic Man" boggles the mind—but there was a polymorphously perverse quality to a character who personified Georges Bataille's notion of the body on

OPPOSITE: PLASTIC MAN #17 1949


UH-OH! A BLACKJACK ROBBERY!
AWRK! ONLY ONE GUY CAN STRETCH LIKE THAT ...PLASTIC MAN!
HAD TO LEAVE THE WALLET AND THE BLACKJACK! WOULDN'T WANT PLASTIC MAN TO FIND THEM ON ME IF HE CATCHES ME!
I SHOULD CATCH THAT CROOK RIGHT AWAY, BUT FIRST I'VE GOT TO SEE ABOUT THIS POOR GUY!
HE'S JUST UNCONSCIOUS! I'LL GET A COP TO TAKE CARE OF HIM!
HEY, OFFICER!
PLASTIC MAN! WHAT'S UP?
YOU'LL FIND A MAN UNCONSCIOUS ON THE SIDEWALK DOWN THE STREET! BLACKJACK JOB! TAKE CARE OF THE VICTIM, WILL YOU?
RIGHT AWAY, PLAS!
WISH I'D HAD A GOOD LOOK AT HIM! BUT IF IT'S SOME WELL KNOWN HOOD, I MAY SPOT HIM IN THE VICINITY!
2

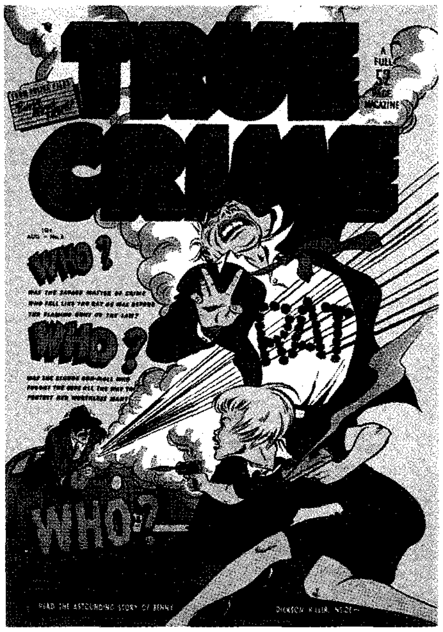
Cole often used Plastic Man's body as a compositional device. His distended body is an arrow pointing out the sights as it hurtles through time, guiding the reader's eye around the page.

the brink of dissolving its borders. Cole let it all hang out as Plastic Man slithered from panel to panel—sometimes shifting from male to female, and freely mutating from erect and hardboiled to soft as a Dali clock.

Most of the plots are as twisted and swervy as Plastic Man himself. They're convincing enough in their mad, moment-to-moment flow, but they're as hard to reconstruct and as elusive as dreams, with their vividly improvised incidents. Gender-bending and cross-dressing were the least of it. In a 1942 story, Plastic Man is swallowed whole by one Cyrus Smythe, a seventeenth-century mad doctor whose brain has been transplanted into a dying Army pilot's body. Smythe, who has learned how to grow hundreds of feet tall, but who must walk on his hands since the body he possesses is paralyzed from the waist down, chokes to death when Plastic Man climbs out of his stomach to lodge himself in the giant's windpipe. The early stories, while bizarre, don't feel psychopathic, sadistic, or even particularly mean-spirited in Cole's telling. In his postwar period, the "Plastic Man" stories are totally nuts in a different way, prefiguring the idea-per-minute vaudeville zaniness of the early *Mad* comics. In all his stories, heavily populated by shape-changing villains, mad scientists, and monsters, as well as by more mundane murderers, con men, and saboteurs, Cole demonstrates the termite go-for-broke quality that made his friend Gill Fox exclaim admiringly, "That's Jack, he'd let his mind go anywhere!"

GILL FOX told me that he remembers starring in an 8-mm. home movie that Cole shot sometime in the early forties, after Jack and Dorothy became his neighbors in Stamford, Connecticut, in order to be closer to Quality's studio there. Cole's improvised film scenario, about an ambitious young comic-book artist fighting a deadline, had Fox dragging his drawing table into the bathroom, pulling his pants down, and continuing to work while seated on the toilet. Cole was always behind schedule, a procrastinator and a perfectionist who took pride in his craft and managed to turn out his monthly quota only by working for punishing all-night stretches. Fox recalls a sweltering summer day in the Quality studio that has become legendary among his generation of comic-book artists: Only the nasty buzz of horseflies broke the silence of cartoonists sweating at their desks over some exceptionally brutal deadline when a disturbance broke their concentration. Something was fluttering and streaking by above their heads. All work stopped until they caught what turned out to be one very angry horsefly hauling a long tissue-paper banner with the words "Drink Pepsi Cola!" that Cole had patiently lettered and glued to the insect's back. A genius at work!

Creig Flessel, an intimate colleague of Cole's, visited the Quality offices around that time, wanting to observe an old letterer there who could ink in text balloons perfectly without pencilling. He noticed Busy Arnold with large scissors at a nearby desk cutting old "Plastic Man" originals to ribbons: "I nudged Jack and pointed it out to him, and he just shrugged sheepishly." After the art was used, Arnold routinely destroyed it to prevent unauthorized reprinting. The disposability of the art was a given, but it makes Cole's pride in his craft seem downright existential!


TRUE CRIME
A FULL 52 PAGE MAGAZINE
WHO?
WHO?
HALT
WHO?

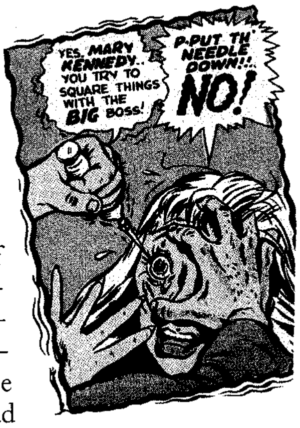
Cole's crime comics were among the most lurid in a lurid genre.

The pressure to produce lots of pages quickly, in a situation that offered little prestige and relatively small rates for the skills involved, took its toll. "A number of the artists I knew back then cracked," says Fox, who still draws a Sunday feature for the *Herald Press*, in New Britain, Connecticut. "Al Bryant, who drew Doll Man, drove himself into an abutment on the Long Island Expressway shortly after a nervous breakdown. Another guy at Quality, a writer, threw himself in front of a subway, but somehow survived." John Spranger, an exceptionally gifted artist who assisted on "Plastic Man" in the postwar years, had a severe breakdown; Bob Wood, like many of the other artists, drank heavily. It was a tough business, making funny books, but Cole flourished in that environment.

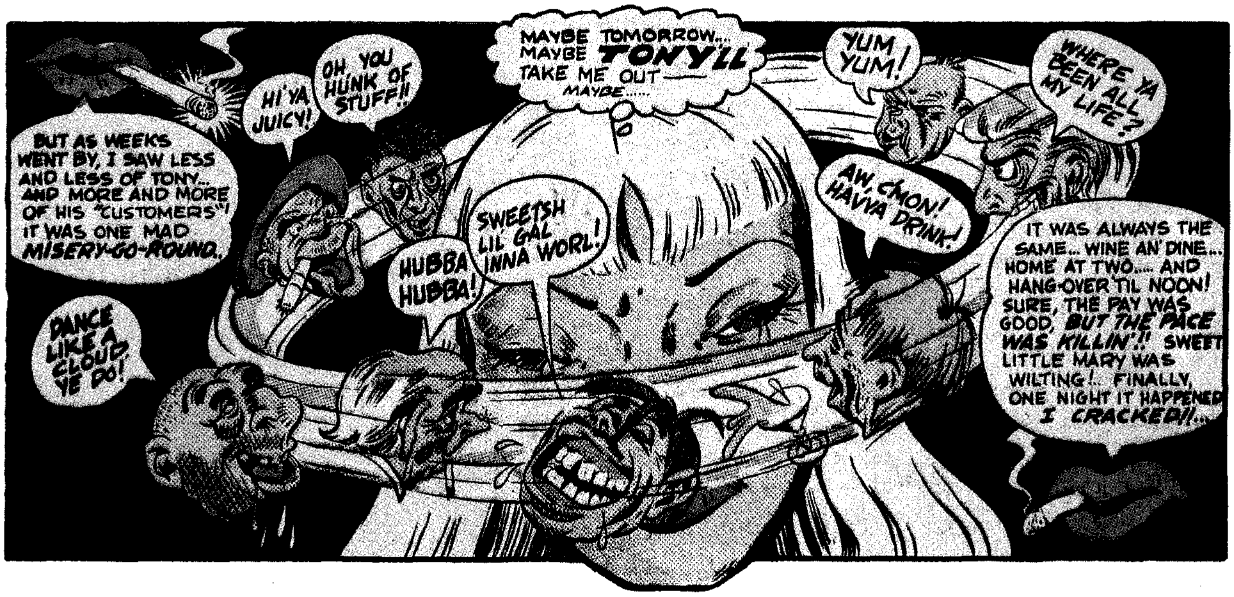
At the start of the Second World War, Cole doubled his workload to put money aside for Dorothy in case he got drafted. Although he never had children, and was apparently in good health, he wasn't taken. As one of the best cartoonists left on the home front at a moment when publishers were selling all the comics their newsprint rations let them print, Cole made out well. He even briefly ghosted the daily newspaper version of "The Spirit" when Will Eisner got drafted. By the end of the war, Cole was getting the top rate for comic books (about thirty-five dollars per page) as well as occasional bonuses of up to twenty-five hundred dollars when his books broke the two-hundred-thousand point. He and Dorothy bought property and settled into a series of houses in New England. "Their Stamford place was a fourteen-room mansion that had once belonged to the Masked Marvel, a famous pool shark," Flessel told me. "Dorothy was horrified by the cold marble tiles when she first saw the house, so Jack put in some wall-to-wall carpeting. It must have set him back plenty, but he absolutely doted on his wife." Flessel remembers Cole with great affection as an acute, thoughtful, and gentle guy, a "pussycat," with a screwy smile and an irrepressible streak of humor. When I visited the Flessels' Long Island home, he conjured up one small Jacques Tati-like moment when the Coles were leaving after a weekend visit there in the mid-forties: Stooping to get behind the wheel of his pint-sized car, the oversized Cole knocked his homburg to the ground. He scooped it up while shutting the car door, then casually put the hat back on top of the roof and drove off waving.

Cole worked at home, sending in his popular fifteen-page lead stories for Police Comics every month, as well as material for his "Plastic Man" solo title and occasional humor pieces for other comics. Fox has said, "Jack insisted on doing everything himself. . . . He didn't even clear his plot lines with anyone. The only thing we did was copy-read for mistakes." Cole was elated to get his own book; but when he was told that it would mean having assistants and ghosts do some of the stories he burst into tears. (Neither Flessel nor Fox could verify what might be an apocryphal story, but both independently said it sounded like the Cole they knew.) The problem of Cole's ghosts and assistants plagues anyone who admires his work. Since some of his assistants—most notably his worshipful friend Alex Kotzky and John Spranger—were very skillful mimics, and since Cole didn't always sign his own art, the "forgeries" are sometimes as hard to spot as Plastic Man himself in disguise. When the characters tilt and sway, unable to hold themselves upright at a mere ninety degrees, when that extra blaze of invention—a few more ideas than any sane artist would dare squeeze into a panel—shines through, one can surmise that one is in the hands of the master. "Plastic Man" was totally ghosted after 1950, when Cole reached his giddiest heights before burning out on the character. The ghosts who remained behind lost their inspiration, but the buoyant originality of the basic concept kept "Plastic Man" afloat through 1956. Subsequent attempts to revive the character haven't been especially distinguished, nor have imitations that recycle the notion of a stretchable hero, though the character's virtual DNA lives on in the leader of Marvel Comics' Fantastic Four, a "straight" Plastic Man with way too much starch.

In 1947, Cole hired Alex Kotzky to help him package True Crime Comics, a new publisher's short-lived attempt to cash in on the crime comics then dominating the field; a story in the second issue, "Murder, Morphine and Me," has become notorious as one of the most intense and delirious examples that the lurid genre had to offer. One small panel—so charged that it has tremor lines around it and tilts, almost tumbling off the page—was enshrined as Exhibit A in Dr. Fredric Wertham's "Seduction of the


YES, MARY KENNEDY.. YOU TRY TO SQUARE THINGS WITH THE BIG BOSS!
P-PUT TH' NEEDLE DOWN!!.. NO!

TRUE CRIME COMICS © 1947 MAGAZINE VILLAGE


BUT AS WEEKS WENT BY, I SAW LESS AND LESS OF TONY.. AND MORE AND MORE OF HIS "CUSTOMERS"! IT WAS ONE MAD MISERY-GO-ROUND.
HI'YA JUICY!
OH YOU HUNK OF STUFF!!
MAYBE TOMORROW... MAYBE TONY'LL TAKE ME OUT— MAYBE......
YUM YUM!
WHERE YA BEEN ALL MY LIFE?
AW, C'MON! HAVVA DRINK!
SWEETSH LIL GAL INNA WORL'!
HUBBA HUBBA!
DANCE LIKE A CLOUD YE DO!
IT WAS ALWAYS THE SAME... WINE AN' DINE... HOME AT TWO.... AND HANG-OVER TIL NOON! SURE, THE PAY WAS GOOD, BUT THE PACE WAS KILLIN'!! SWEET LITTLE MARY WAS WILTING!.. FINALLY, ONE NIGHT IT HAPPENED I CRACKED!!...

"Murder, Morphine and Me" was formally sophisticated, with every element deployed for narrative effect.

Innocent," the book that triggered the Senate hearings and thereby toppled the industry: it shows a closeup of Mary Kennedy, the dope-dealing protagonist, being stabbed in the eye by a junkie with a hypodermic needle. I concede that this isn't Mother Goose, but I find the panel (part of a dream sequence, incidentally) emblematic of the comic book's visceral power to pass the reader's analytical defenses and pierce the brain. Dr. Wertham, on the other hand, focussed on the depraved image as an example of "the injury-to-the-eye motif . . . [that] shows perhaps the true color of crime comics better than anything else. It has no counterpart in any other literature of the world, for children or adults." I suspect that Dr. Wertham never saw Buñuel and Dali's "Un Chien Andalou" (the 1929 film shocker that featured a closeup of a woman's eye getting slashed by a razor), but that it had made a strong impression on Cole. On the other hand, Cole's True Crime capers point out the continuum between his manic humor and plain old mania. As Kotzky recalled, "Jack was a wild man mentally."

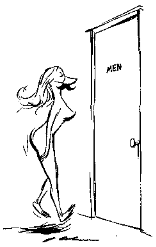
The New York State Legislature thought enough of "Murder, Morphine and Me" to reprint eight pages of blow-ups and excerpts in its 1951 report on comic books and censorship. As a young teen in the arid comic-book landscape of the early sixties, I stumbled onto this report in Manhattan's Donnell Library. It was my first exposure to Cole, and I checked the report out repeatedly. The story included ethnically stereotyped Scandinavians and Italians, lingerie shots of Mary Kennedy, and more gangland gunplay than there is in a John Woo Hong Kong action flick, all delivered with Cole's signature velocity. It is also among the most formally sophisticated comics stories I've ever seen; all the elements, including the panel shapes and the lettering, are deployed for narrative effect. When Mary, working as a hash-slinger, spills coffee on Tony, seated at her lunch counter, it's love at first sight. Through two progressive closeups, moving from profiles of their faces to their twitching lips, they exchange a machine-gun volley of speech balloons with dialogue worthy of James M. Cain. Tony departs ("Be seein' ya, honey eyes"), leaving Mary almost swooning, her heart banging against her chest like a five-hundred-pound canary trying to break out of its cage. (Cole's body language is priceless.)

Cole's last comic-book work was for Web of Evil, Quality's entry into the horror comics of the early fifties. Unlike most of his output, these horror comics, often scripted and barbarically inked by others, look as if they were done for the money. One noteworthy tale, clearly by Cole, "The Killer from Saturn," is about a serial murderer from outer space who terrorizes the city but turns out to be a mousy municipal window clerk who has gone postal. Wearing an imposing monster costume and stilts, he takes revenge on those who abused him. He's put in a mental institution where, in the closing panel, two detectives outside the barred door peer in at the pathetic wimp who still insists that he's the omnipotent killer from Saturn. One cop says, "He always will be . . . up here . . . where he can safely kill . . . in his *imagination*." The story, laced with fifties psychological jargon, seems to be Cole's hymn to the power of fantasy and the need to keep that power contained.

If Cole was through with comics, comics were also through with him. Searching for work in the fifties, he is said to have brought his portfolio to DC Comics, one of the few publishers that survived past 1954, and was summarily turned away. As early as the mid-forties, he had been preparing to leave the field, more out of ambition and restlessness than remorse. He began to put much of his energy into reshaping himself as a gag cartoonist, selling occasional drawings to the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, and *Judge*. A knack for drawing genuinely sexy women made his cartoons, signed "Jake," a fixture of the down-market girlie-cartoon and pin-up magazines. Cole was struggling as a mid-echelon gag cartoonist at the end of 1953 when he submitted a batch of gags to *Stag Party*, a planned men's magazine that announced its need for cartoons in trade journals. Cole's drawings began appearing in the fifth issue of the magazine, after it was launched as *Playboy*. At least one full-page drawing by him appeared in *Playboy* every month thereafter for the rest of his life.

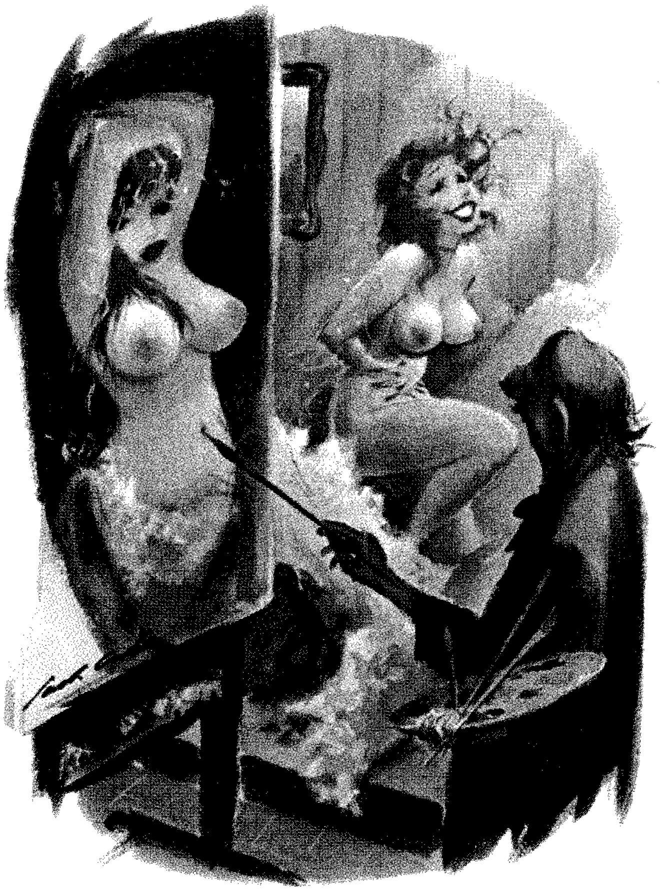
HUGH HEFNER had grown up reading and loving "Plastic Man," and, in a phone interview, described it to me as "the most hallucinogenic comic book of its time." At first, Hefner, a self-confessed failed cartoonist, didn't realize that he was working with *that* Jack Cole; indeed, the deft and sophisticated gag cartoons that appeared in *Playboy*, often in confidently applied, rich watercolor, bore almost no stylistic resemblance to Cole's brash comic-book art. Hefner remembers receiving the first submission, and though there was nothing he could use in that first batch, he said, "I loved the free and loose line, the quality of even those first pencil roughs, and I wrote a letter strongly encouraging him to send more. One of the things I tried to do was, like *The New Yorker*, develop a stable of artists closely associated with my magazine."

Cole soon signed an exclusive contract with *Playboy* and, in effect, became its defining artist—its Peter Arno. *Playboy's* first art editor, Art Paul, told me, "Cole helped give the magazine its visual identity. Unlike Gardner Rea and Eldon Dedini, who came from *Esquire*, Cole was a *Playboy* product." In fact, Females by Cole cocktail napkins were the second product *Playboy* licensed, right after the cufflinks based on Paul's famous rabbit logo. The Females, horny derivations of William Steig's symbolic drawings, were breezy black-and-white brush impressions of women's psychological states. Cole came up with the concept for the ongoing feature; Hefner, as the very hands-on cartoon editor, worked closely with him.



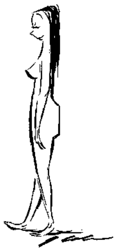
Curious

In 1955, on Hefner's first trip to New York after launching *Playboy*, he visited Cole's home in New Milford. The Coles had just resettled there after floods destroyed their house in Winsted, Connecticut, laying waste to most of their furniture and possessions. Hefner urged Cole to move to the Midwest, and he reluctantly agreed. He wrote to Gill Fox, "Middle of January the boss is moving us to Chicago. Swore I'd never leave these old hills, but he's dangled so much green bait what're you going to do? The sad part is leaving old friends." Though Hefner offered Cole a staff job, he preferred to work at home, and, at the beginning of 1956, settled into what he called that "pool table of a state," buying a place in the town of Cary, Illinois, about forty miles northwest of Chicago. Hefner was twelve years younger than Cole, and yet, he told me, "My heroes were now working for me—but as Cole's editor, of course, I was the father figure."



Hefner points out that Cole was still drawing fantasies for *Playboy*. Cole's goddesses were estrogen soufflés who mesmerized the ineffectual saps who lusted after them. The stacked night-club chanteuse who sings "I ain't got no bodeee . . . " in one of his oft-reprinted color cartoons makes Marilyn Monroe, whom she's modelled on, look hard-boiled. Cole had climbed to the top of the heap in comic books, even if he looked back on it as a dung heap; now he was the star cartoonist for the hottest and hippest "slick" in America.

In the hierarchy of the applied arts, the comic book has been near the bottom—above only tattoo art and sign painting—and every commercial artist has been as aware of these unspoken aesthetic ranks as any American who isn't white has been of race. The gag cartoon, being a self-contained, single-image composition and therefore a distant cousin of painting, has been seen as more worthy. The comic strip—because of the fame and great fortune it can bring, and because this is America, where such things have mattered most—has been at the pinnacle. Early in 1958, unbeknownst to Hefner, Cole drew up several weeks' worth of a newspaper strip called "Betsy and Me" and walked the samples over to Field Enterprises' Chicago Sun-Times syndicate after a meeting at *Playboy*. Cole, like Plastic Man, had changed his appearance: "Betsy and Me" was drawn in the then ultra-modernistic, minimalist fifties style that looked like nothing he had done before. The complex ongoing "voice-over" narration by nebbish-husband Chester Tibbet about family life with his wife, Betsy, and their five-year-old boy genius, Farley, actually has a formal connection to the inventive narration in "Murder, Morphine and Me." The mature verbal sophistication Cole demonstrates in "Betsy and Me" may be a by-product of the cultivated milieu he encountered through *Playboy*. The syndicate knew nothing about Cole's other careers, but found the feature fresh and exciting. The strip was launched that May and was appearing in nearly fifty newspapers by the summer; the forty-three-year-old cartoonist's childhood ambition for a successful strip of his own was finally being realized. Then Cole snapped.



Veteran

On Tuesday evening, August 12, 1958, he went to a party at *Playboy's* offices. According to Hefner's private journal, Cole "was seemingly in the best of spirits." Art Paul told me that Cole, who was habitually temperate, drank a bit more than usual at the gathering, and seemed somewhat overexcited. Cole told him he had something he needed to say—the art editor found this exceptional, since they weren't intimate, and work-related issues tended to be taken up directly with Hefner—but someone in-

1991 BY PLAYBOY

terrupted, and the conversation never took place. The next morning, Cole greeted a neighbor, a railroad conductor he'd known since moving to Cary, who noticed nothing out of the ordinary. At around 2 P.M., Cole told Dorothy he was going out for the mail and the papers. He took their Chevy station wagon, and at around five showed up at Dave Donner's sport shop, in nearby Crystal Lake. He bought a .22-calibre, single-shot Marlin rifle. Between five-fifteen and five-thirty, he phoned the same neighbor he'd seen earlier and, after apologizing for the imposition, asked him to tell Dorothy that he was going to end it all. Then he hung up. At around 6 P.M., on a gravel road a few miles from his home, three boys found Cole slumped behind the wheel of his car: a bullet wound in his head, the rifle in his lap, and a note on a tablet next to him. He was still alive. At six-ten, a McHenry County Deputy Sheriff, who had been notified of the suicide threat, showed up. The deputy called an ambulance, but Cole died in the hospital at 6:45 P.M. without having regained consciousness. Cole's note said, "To whom it may concern: Please notify my dear wife, Dorothy Cole, 703 Silver Lake Road, Cary, Illinois, but first tell a neighbor so someone will be with her when she receives the news. Thank you. Jack Cole. Please forgive me, hon." Cole's body was carried back to New Castle, and he was buried there on August 16th.

On the day he killed himself, Cole had mailed two letters, which were received the next morning; one was to his wife, the other was to Hugh Hefner. The letter to Hefner reads:

> Dear Hef:
>
> When you read this I shall be dead. I cannot go on living with myself and hurting those dear to me. What I do has nothing to do with you. You have been the best guy I've ever worked for in all these years. I'm only sorry I leave owing you so much, but dear Dorothy will repay you when the estate is settled. I wish you nothing but the best in the years to come. Also my best regards to Pat, Art, Ray, Joe, etc. etc. and all the other fine folks at Playboy.
>
> Thanks again for everything, Heffer. You're a good boy.
>
> Kindest regards,
> Jack

At the inquest, the coroner asked Dorothy about the letter Cole sent to her. She testified that in it he explained why he killed himself. The coroner was able to establish that Cole had never been under a doctor's care for any nervous condition and then asked Dorothy if she knew of any reason he might have had for taking his life. Dorothy answered only, "We had had an argument before." When a juror asked if the letter would be entered as evidence, the coroner said, "The letter was a very personal letter. I read it myself. We just wanted to bring it out that far." After Cole's death, Dorothy did not maintain contact with her husband's family or friends. Hefner, too, lost track of her, though he knows that "she remarried about a year or so after."

Speculating about a suicide's motives at least keeps a dialogue alive with that conversation-stopper of a corpse. It also drives a thin wooden stake of rational explanation through the corpse's heart—to punish the dead for their rebuke to the living. The handful of people who care about Cole or his work have speculated as wildly about his suicide as any school class puzzling over E. A. Robinson's chestnut, "Richard Cory." Baseless rumors about money problems, terminal illness, substance abuse—more plots than could fill a True Crime comic book—have hovered over Cole's death. Did he suffer from manic-depression? Cole was never diagnosed, but, like Plastic Man, he had his ups and downs. Dick Cole recalls that as a young man his brother once came home furious after an argument with his fiancée, Dorothy, his hands all bloody from pummelling every tree he'd walked past. Insofar as these things run in families, Cole's uncle, his father's brother, Frank, had a breakdown and committed suicide a short time after Jack moved to New York. Cole's association with *Playboy*, especially, has fuelled prurient gossip about swinging affairs and infidelities. When I asked Hefner if Cole took part in the *Playboy* life style, he chuckled: "He was no Shel Silverstein." If Cole's last letter to Dorothy had some sordid confession or salacious details, they remain unknown, since the coroner, Theron Ehorn, was no Kenneth Starr. As a result of his discretion, the big question marks that hang over all suicides can't be dispelled with much more precision than to say that something had gone wrong in the Coles' twenty-four-year-long marriage, and Jack Cole blamed himself. As Hefner told me, "It's an unresolved mystery. His end is as inconclusive as a Somerset Maugham story."

Was Cole "unbalanced"? Of course: it goes with the suicide's job description. Jacques Rigaut, a Dada artist who shot himself in 1929, once said that "suicide is a vocation"; it's at least one hell of a career move—look at Sylvia Plath!—and it turns one toward an artist's work as if to a career résumé. "The mystery of his death informs the work," as Hefner put it. Suicide does indeed figure in many of Cole's comic-book stories, like 1948's "Mr. Morbid," wherein a criminal perfumer concocts an essence of misery (one whiff and you knock yourself off), but most of Cole's cronies used suicide as a plot device without going on to self-destruct. More to the point may be the astonishing number of his *Playboy* cartoons that have impotence as their subtext. Putting aside limp jokes about Plastic Man's inability to get it up, impotence—or, rather, the psychologically linked issue of potency as the power to conceive a child—was key to Cole. All who knew Cole told me that he doted on kids. Jack and Dorothy's childlessness cast a poignant shadow on their isolated lives.

Hefner, who still misses the man and his work, has published several reprint tributes to Cole over the years. One *Playboy* classic shows a middle-aged milquetoast stretched out on an analyst's couch. "In the beginning," he recounts wistfully, "I created the heavens and the earth . . ." Although Cole looked back on his own beginnings in the comics with disenchantment, dismissing the "comics mags" in a letter to a friend as being "for the birds," he did have the power to soar and create worlds there, with barely an editor to shackle him.

"Plastic Man" was a stream of consciousness, allowing Cole's id the license to ooze freely, and in its bounces and lurches Cole found grace and balance. When he traded in Plastic Man's silly putty for *Playboy's* silicone, he also traded away the innocent and omnidirectional sexuality of infancy for the mere heterosexuality of adolescence. Sublimating further, he squeezed his creativity into ever smaller boxes: his two-dimensional newspaper strip is as sexless as any other nineteen-fifties sitcom. Cole's heartbreaking "fantasy" about a loving couple doting on their brilliant little boy—it reads like a suicide note delivered in daily installments! As he climbed his ladder of success, up from the primal mulch of the comic books, he finally arrived at air that was too thin to breathe: Jack Cole, a comics genius, died of growing up. ♦

FICTION

BLIND JOZEF PRONEK

In the land of the free and the home of the brave, only the strong survive.

BY ALEKSANDAR HEMON

FROM the air, Chicago in the snow looked like a frosted computer-chip board, the cars moving serenely across it like bytes between chips. As the plane was circling, it hit some turbulence, and the orange juice Pronek had been drinking jumped out of its plastic cup and landed on his beige pants. Only once he'd landed and unbuckled his seat belt did Pronek realize that the juice had left behind a stain with the subtle hue of urine. Andrea was waiting for him at the exit. He pointed to the stain and made a joke about his bladder and the wretched refuse it contained. Andrea didn't laugh. She offered him her right cheek and the upper body attached to it, while keeping her lower body a couple of feet away, as if she were worried about what might happen if their pelvises made contact.

They stood on the moving walkway, gliding through a dark tunnel as a synthetic female voice warbled a warning against leaving baggage unattended.

Pronek tried to be charming. "If the thing that takes you up is escalator, is this levelator?" he asked.

"Yeah, right," Andrea said, digging through her purse and excavating a banana.

Pronek had met her the summer before, in Ukraine. It was 1991, and they had roamed through Kiev together, flirting during the putsch. They had held hands in front of the Ukrainian Parliament as it declared independence, while everyone around them waved flags and blushed with patriotic excitement. Andrea had had a British boyfriend, who wore a pink headband at all times and spent every night optimistically scouring Kiev for a rave—and never finding one. He worked as a cameraman for the BBC, and on the day independence was declared he was—bless his heart—very busy. So Andrea and Pronek walked to the Dnieper and, for a couple of dollars, bought a Red Army officer's hat and a nicked leather belt. They ate a Frisbee-size pizza with carrot-and-beet topping and watched the river glittering with the scattered stars of dead fish. Pronek explored the inside of Andrea's thighs, never getting past the panty line, as the tips of their tongues collided clumsily. In a fit of inexplicable giddiness, Pronek panted a Sinatra song in her ear: "*Eye praktis ehvree day to faind sum klehvr lains to say, too maik da meenin cum truh . . .*" It was one of the songs that his blues band, Blind Jozef Pronek & Dead Souls, played in Sarajevo, where—he claimed—they were popular. Miraculously, she found it endearing. But the next day she left for Kharkiv with the cameraman.

After Pronek returned to Sarajevo, he wrote her love letters that were full of auburn autumn leaves and reminiscences about the time (a total of fifty-three hours) they had spent together. In reply, she said that she missed him and wanted to see him again—a desire that was driven, Pronek thought, by the unlikelihood of its being fulfilled. They began to rewrite the time they had spent together: she remembered drinking sweet wine, although in Kiev they had drunk only infernal vodka. He recalled her fragrant perfume, although they had both been in a perpetual sweat in a city where the water pressure was perennially too low to bathe. With titillating intensity, they remembered dancing cheek to cheek, when in reality they had trotted idiotically to the rhythm of anachronistic German disco, as hirsute Ukrainian men swarmed around Andrea and tried to rub their perspiring bodies against hers. Once they had forged a sufficient number of counterfeit memories, she invited him to Chicago, perhaps prompted by a news report about the war in Croatia and "tensions" in Bosnia. It had been a generous invitation, and neither of them had imagined that Pronek would ever be able to accept it. But then he received an official invitation to visit the United States in the capacity of a freedom-loving writer, and he added Chicago to his itinerary.

SHE looked different from how he remembered her: she was paler, her hair was shorter and darker, and she wore a silver nose ring. But he still longed to touch her.

As they approached the city, the skyline was flat against the blank sky, like the bottom of a Tetris screen. Andrea drove through what she called the Loop, pointing at each skyscraper and announcing its function. It was all gibberish to Pronek: the Board of Trade, the tallest building in the world, the biggest something, the busiest something else. He rolled down the window and looked up, but he couldn't see the tops of the buildings.

"This is how cockroach sees furniture in apartment," he said.

"I'm sure," Andrea said, turning on the radio.

She unlocked her apartment door (a sign on it read "VIOLATORS WILL BE TOWED"), and a pungent wave of smoke and French fries filled Pronek's nostrils.

"My roommate is a slob," she said. Pronek panned the room: a sofa with stuffing hatching from its cushions, a stereo, and a TV stacked with CDs and videos. There was a small table, its surface buried under McDonald's bags, crushed cigarette packages, and ashtrays brimming with butts and ashes. The window looked out on a brick wall. A porcine black cat glanced at Pronek and then turned away. On the kitchen table was a throng of beer bottles with their labels torn off, huddled together as if awaiting execution. The sink was filled with dishes submerged in a murky liquid.

"Who is your roommate?" Pronek asked.

"He's my boyfriend," Andrea said. "But we have separate bedrooms."

"How long have you been together?"

"On and off, about ten years. But I hate the fucker. I think I wanna break up."

"He knows about me?"

"Oh yeah, sure. I told him you were coming. He doesn't give a fuck."

She handed him a cup of coffee across the table covered with greasy film. He wanted to touch her cheeks, and the shimmering gossamer on the nape of her neck. He was mesmerized by her lips, which barely touched each other as she uttered her "b"s and "m"s, and her teeth flashing as she formed her fricatives. Then he carried his two suitcases to her bedroom, where her bras hung, like rabbit skins, from doorknobs.

That night, they made love. Before they did, Andrea unrolled a scroll of condoms and made him wear one. "This is the nineties," she said. "People can only touch each other if they wear rubber gloves." As they ground the sheets and the bed creaked enthusiastically, Andrea kept asking, "Isn't this good? Do you like this? Isn't this great?" Then she went to the bathroom. Her silhouette against the light, Pronek realized, was gorgeous.

When she came back in, smelling of banana shampoo, he disrobed his penis, got up, and kissed her wet hair on his way out of the room, the condom dangling from his hand. But as he was about to enter the bathroom the door opened and a man came out. Pronek stood there, in front of him, nude and suddenly very aware of his hairless chest.

"Hi," Pronek said.

"How're you doing?" the man answered.

"Good."

"Good."

Silence.

"Who are you?"

"I am Andrea's friend."

"I'm Carwin," he said. He was fashionably unshaved and had unruly hair. He wore an unbuttoned flannel shirt and a T-shirt with a picture of a crucified blond angel on it. "Are you Russian?"

Pronek's feet were cold, so he put his left sole on his right calf, and stood there like a Masai warrior—except that he was holding a used condom instead of a spear.

"No, I'm from Sarajevo, Bosnia," he said. "But we met in Ukraine."

"Well, it's nice to meet you," he said. "I hope I never see your fucking face again." Then he yelled toward Andrea's room, "Now you bring in fucking foreigners. American dick isn't good enough for you, you fucking bitch."

"Fuck you, you fucking Anglo asshole!" she yelled back.

Pronek finally slipped into the bathroom. He dropped the condom into the

"Does it hurt when my attorney does this?"

• •

toilet, but every time he flushed it came back up, bobbing defiantly. He looked in the mirror and saw vermillion pimples on his face, sallow teeth, and a square Slavic head with greasy hair that stuck to his low forehead. He recognized himself as a foreigner—an unseemly, uncouth body with nowhere to go. Then he shaved and washed, as if celebrating his new identity.

ANDREA was an artist. She showed Pronek her most recent painting, a self-portrait with a hog and a sow, entitled "Home." In the painting, Andrea's arms were slung around the hams of both pigs. All three figures were staring at Pronek. The pigs were adamantly pink, and the sow had swollen teats. Andrea told him that she'd painted it two years before and hadn't done anything since. "There are things I need to understand about myself before I can share them with other people," she said.

Andrea worked in the gift shop at the Art Institute of Chicago. Every morning, she would lurch upright in bed—the way women in horror movies wake from a nightmare just before the killer comes in to slash them—then light a cigarette. She smoked with a curious intensity: she'd inhale with small, furious gasps and exhale with a low, burdened sigh, while keeping her right elbow wedged into the palm of her left hand, the cigarette always in close proximity to her mouth. Then she would whistle. Pronek, half asleep, would hear the bustle of her picking through the wardrobe and the rustle of her rolling stockings. He'd try to recognize the song she was whistling, but would sink back into sleep before he could.

When Pronek finally got up, a couple of hours later, he'd follow her scent to the bathroom, where the bathtub still displayed the curled vestiges of her hair. Having performed his toilet duties, he'd salvage a plate from the dish swamp and eat some limp mozzarella with crackers. He'd sip coffee from a cup that had lipstick scars on the brim and he'd try to write to his parents in Sarajevo. He could never get beyond the place and date—which seemed, to him, self-explanatory. He wanted to call them instead, but he had no money to pay for a call. On the news, he saw barricades, people running in panic, and white armored vehicles parked in the middle of a Sarajevo street.

Most days, he met Andrea for lunch, walking to the museum along the Magnificent Mile—which made him think of "The Magnificent Seven," then of "The Seven Samurai," though there was nothing magnificent about the morguelike buildings and the lugubrious mile or about the marble-faced people who walked along it, clutching their purses and briefcases. As he trudged through the April slush, he realized just how superfluous he was, how everything would be exactly the same if the space his body occupied at that moment were empty. When he later shared this thought with Andrea, she said, with a nasty giggle, "The land of the free, the home of the brave."

Pronek would wait for Andrea to take her lunch break, then they'd drift together through the museum, following a battalion of high-school kids, predominantly blond and obese ("Cornfed," Andrea whispered), who hee-hawed in front of naked-lady pictures. Pronek tried to sound cultured and civilized and made the most of the two hours he had once spent in the Louvre, much of it lost in a nightmarish eighteenth-century wing.

Andrea's favorite painting was huge and completely black—black wrinkles, black smudges, black puckered paint. Pronek didn't know why he liked it, but he did. They'd gawk at it for a while, then Andrea would say, "Who are we in the hands of an angry God?"

One afternoon, Andrea accompanied Pronek to the coat check. "How can you ever know that you're getting right coat?" he asked.

"Because you have a number," Andrea said.

"But I think maybe they're going through your pockets, photographing what's in there, making copies of keys, and changing everything, so when you get out and put your coat on your memories don't look right."

Andrea shrugged. "You Eastern Europeans are weird," she said.

When Pronek got home, Carwin was there, watching television. He leaped off the couch—probably interrupted while masturbating—and headed for his room. Pronek changed the channel from "The Dukes of Hazzard" to CNN and saw a crowd of people in front of the Parliament building in Sarajevo, cowering or running for cover. There was a quick shot of two feet, one with a sneaker, one bare, both twitching. The rest of the body was obscured by people trying to help, some of them crying and wiping their cheeks with bloody hands.

PRONEK decided that he would stay in the United States, possibly for the rest of his life, on a snowy night, after Carwin had dropped a pot of spaghetti sauce on the floor and yelled "Fuck!" Pronek woke up from a nightmare with his heart pounding. Through the open door, he could see that Carwin was trying to clean up the sauce but was instead spreading it, like red paint, all over the floor. It looked like blood, and Pronek imagined himself lying on that floor, with his brains slowly leaking out, feeling nothing but a tingling dizziness. Carwin, having pensively scratched his crotch, decided to abandon the cleanup effort, said "Fuck!" again to seal the decision, then stomped off to the couch to watch TV.

The next morning, Pronek woke up ill, with his forehead and the nape of his neck throbbing. Andrea was gone. He heard the TV but couldn't get up, so he closed his eyes again and floated in and out of listless dreams. Andrea came home after work, made some tea, gave him a bowl of Wheaties floating in glistening milk, kissed his hot forehead, and then went off to a gallery opening. She didn't come back that night, and Pronek was still sweating when he woke up the next morning, the sheets stuck to his febrile body. He didn't know how long he stayed in bed—intermittent kisses, tepid cups of tea, and waking up in cold, damp sheets all merged into one long repetitive action, like a busy signal. He did remember the wind banging impatiently at the window and a choir of electronic voices shrieking "Touchdown!" And he had a dim recollection of calling his parents: his father telling him that it would be unwise to come home now and his mother saying that there had been less shooting today than yesterday.

Eventually, he gathered his energy and found Carwin and his buddies gathered around the TV, which was showing a porn movie. Pronek took a while to recognize a gaping vagina. But they weren't watching it; they were engaged in a game that involved throwing a hackysack at a revolving ceiling fan. Andrea needed a break, Carwin said, and had gone to De Kalb for a couple of weeks. After the porn movie had ended in a moment of collective ecstasy, Pronek took hold of the remote and found Headline News. Paramilitary units had entered Bosnia from Serbia, it said, and had "committed atrocities."

"What's with you people?" a guy in a Bears hat asked. "Why can't you just chill out?"

"Aren't you going back?" Carwin asked.

"I'm supposed to go back in couple of weeks," Pronek said.

"Why don't you stay here?" the guy with the hat asked.

"What can I do here?" Pronek said. "My parents are there."

"Man, I hope I never see my fuckin' parents again," Carwin said.

"You should stay and get your family out and let those fuckers kill each other if they want," the Bears man said. "I mean, fuck, war is good. If we didn't have war, there would be way too many people, man. It's like natural selection, like free market. The best get on top, the shit sinks. I don't know much about you, Ruskie, but if you got here you must be worth something. It's like those immigrants, man. They were shit at home, they got here, they became fucking millionaires. That's why we're the toughest motherfucking country in the world. Because only the fittest survive here."

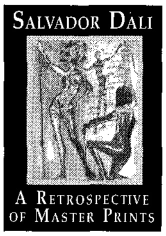
Carwin was sucking on a McDonald's straw, watching the news about the Bulls. "Man," he said, "we're gonna kick ass again this year."

ANDREA returned from De Kalb refreshed, and informed Pronek that they were going to her parents' house for dinner. She whistled "Dear Prudence" on the way there, and after they had listened to a news break about the imminent war in Bosnia she said, "You should stay, you know."

"I know," Pronek said.

The street lights were glaringly bright in the frigid northern wind. They drove past the dark castles of the University of Chicago and entered a maze of identical red brick buildings.

Andrea's father shook Pronek's hand vigorously and her mother said, "We've heard so much about you." They introduced him to an old woman, bent over a walker, gripping its handles as if she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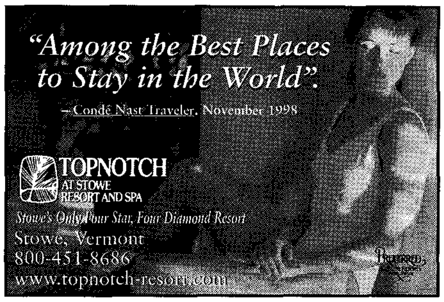
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were delivering a speech from a pulpit.

"Nana," Andrea's mother said, "this is Andrea's friend from Bosnia."

"I never was in Boston," Nana said.

"Bosnia, Nana, Bosnia. Near Czechoslovakia," Andrea's mother said, shaking her head and waving her hands as if pushing away a basketball. In a moment of confusion, Pronek took off his shoes. Andrea's mother glanced at his feet and said, "We don't take our shoes off here, but it's all right," then pointed left and said, "Let's move to the salon."

They sat at a round table, and Andrea's father filled their wineglasses. He loomed over Pronek with the green bottle in his hand, waiting for him to try the wine. Pronek sipped cautiously, and the glass clinked against his teeth. He said, "It's good. Little sweet."

"Well, it's a Chardonnay," Andrea's father said, delighted.

"I want some wine," Nana said.

"You know it's not good for you, Nana," Andrea's mother said.

"What kind of wine do you have back home?" Andrea's father asked, tilting his head to the left to signal intense interest.

"I don't know," Pronek said. "Local kinds."

"Andrea told us you were a writer," Andrea's mother said. She had glasses and a pearl choker and her teeth were white and orderly.

"I was," Pronek said.

"We like good writing," Andrea's mother said.

"Have you ever read Richard Ford?" Andrea's father asked.

"Sensitive middle-class macho shit," Andrea snapped.

"Very well written," Andrea's father said, shaking his head. "Very well written."

Andrea's mother served a sequence of foods unknown to Pronek, ending with blackberry nonfat cheesecake with low-fat kiwi frozen yogurt and French hazelnut-vanilla decaf coffee. Pronek sensed that his feet were about to begin exuding a stench, so he covered his left toes with his right foot. He was convinced that he should move as little as possible, lest unnecessary motion release molecules of body odor. Nana sat across the table from him, smacking her lips and wiggling her jaw, and they could all hear her dentures clacking. She loaded her mouth and chewed patiently, looking around with weary uninterest. Her face was a map of valleys and furrows, cheekbones protruding like mountains. She had a dim blue number tattooed on her right arm.

"What's going on in Czechoslovakia?" Andrea's mother asked.

"Yugoslavia, Mom, Yugoslavia," Andrea said.

"I read about it. I tried to understand it, but I simply can't," Andrea's father said. "Thousands of years of hatred, I guess."

"It's a sad saga," Andrea's mother said.

"Mind-boggling," Andrea's father said. "I hope it'll be over before we have to get involved."

"Where is Bruno?" Nana hollered suddenly. "Bruno, come here!"

"Calm down, Nana. Bruno's gone," Andrea's mother said.

"Come here, Bruno!" Nana yelled toward the kitchen. "Eat with us! We have everything now!"

"Calm down, Nana, or you'll have to go to your room," Andrea's father said sternly and turned to Pronek. "She can be rather obstreperous sometimes."

Pronek didn't know what "obstreperous" meant. "It's O.K.," he said. "No problem."

While Pronek was putting on his shoes, Andrea's father held out his coat. "You should dry-clean it," he said.

Andrea's mother pressed her cheek, soft and redolent of coconut, against Pronek's cheek and kissed the air around his ear.

"Are you going to see Bruno?" Nana asked.

"No, Nana," Pronek said. "I am sorry."

"It was nice having you," Andrea's father said, shaking his hand. "I'm sure you'll do fine if you stay here. This is the greatest country in the world. You just have to work hard."

PRONEK hated hard work, but he needed a job. He got up and put on his best attire: a gray silk shirt, smuggled from China by a family friend, which had an amoeba-shaped grease spot just above the left nipple; his stained beige pants; a tie with a Mickey Mouse pattern that belonged to Carwin; and an orange jacket, also lent by Carwin, who hadn't worn it in years, one size too small.

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The streets in downtown Chicago were named after deceased Presidents, and Pronek imagined the Presidents building the city, gathered around a Monopoly board in Heaven (or Hell). He headed east down Jackson, then north toward Madison, until he reached the Boudin Sourdough Bakery.

A woman, labelled Dawn Wyman by a steel nametag, was waiting for him. Her eyelids were efficiently blue and she had earrings shaped like eyeballs, glaring at him.

"Where are you from?" Dawn asked.

"Bosnia," Pronek said.

"That's in Russia, right?"

"It was in Yugoslavia."

"Right. Well, tell me why you'd like to work for us."

A man in a white cowboy hat was sitting in a corner spooning brown sludge into his mouth, under a picture of the first Boudin Bakery, established in San Francisco in the black-and-white era.

"I like European touch here," Pronek said.

"Right," Dawn said and smiled. There was a trace of lipstick on her white teeth. "We like to provide something different for the customer with sophisticated taste and international experience."

"Right," Pronek said.

"What do you think you can offer to the Boudin Sourdough Bakery?"

"I am hard worker and I like to work with people. I used to be journalist and communicated very much. I can offer life experience," he said.

"Right," Dawn said and yawned, looking at the application. "What do you expect your wage to be?"

"I don't know. Ten dollars for hour."

"We can offer you five, and maybe you can work your way up. Here everyone has a fair chance."

"Right," Pronek said.

On his first day, he cut open croissants, spread Dijon mustard inside them, and then slid them over to the sandwich person. ("This is the sandwich person. This is the kitchen help" was how Dawn introduced them.)

He nearly sliced off his left thumb and passed along a sequence of blood-soaked croissants. Then he cut tomatoes into thin slices for the sandwich person to insert into the abdomens of croissants. He sprinkled cheese crumbles over a platoon of mini-pizzas and filled plastic-foam bowls with reduced-sodium, fat-free Cajun gumbo soup and passed them to the soup person. ("Small bowl—large gumbo. Big bowl—jumbo gumbo" was how Dawn explained the gumbo situation.) He cut the tops off sourdough loaves and disembowelled them, throwing the soft, yeast-smelling viscera into a garbage can before filling the hollow with reduced-fat chili. The first day, he ate a lot of dough instead of throwing it out and suffered gut-wrenching cramps as a punishment.

The first time he went to the large, safelike refrigerator to get a head of lettuce, the door slowly closed behind him, and he found himself alone in an immutable frozen hum lit by a solitary dim bulb. He started pounding on the door, yelling for help, but no one heard him. He pressed his head against the door in desperation and his forehead stuck to the icy surface. He tried to peel it off but it was too painful and he was overcome by fatalistic resignation. When Dawn opened the door, he stumbled out, pulled forward by the door, and then stood in front of her with a red mark across his forehead.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"I was closed there," Pronek said.

"You can open the door from the inside—you just have to push it a little," she said.

"Oh, I know," Pronek said.

By the end of the first week, Pronek was in charge of garbage disposal. He emptied abandoned trays with hollowed-out loaves, mauled croissants, and desiccated bowls, and then pulled out the loaded garbage bags and dragged them off, like corpses, to a nook in the kitchen.

PRONEK rode the El back to Andrea's apartment in a car full of exhausted, sweaty people bunched together like asparagus stalks. Andrea had gone to Ukraine—"I need some space to think," she had told Pronek, "but you can stay here"—and the apartment was being renovated, so that Andrea's parents could sell it. Carwin had moved out and was living in Lincoln Park, so when Pronek came home there were only four Polish construction workers waiting for him, stripping paint off walls, ripping out door posts, and digging up floor tiles. There was a nylon path leading to Andrea's room, held down by paint cans and obscure tools.

The bedroom looked like a monk's cell: a bed and a little tower of books, his empty suitcases, the TV, and a mound of dirty, decaying clothes. Pronek entered it as if boarding a submarine that would carry him to a placid ocean floor, glimmering plankton and evanescent protozoa floating slowly past his window in mesmerizing silence. He lay there until the workers were gone, and then slurped tomato soup in bed, watching Headline News: Sarajevo was besieged, there was a severe shortage of food, and there were rumors of Serb death camps. He watched to see if he could recognize anyone. Once he thought he saw his father running down Sniper's Alley, covering his head with a newspaper.

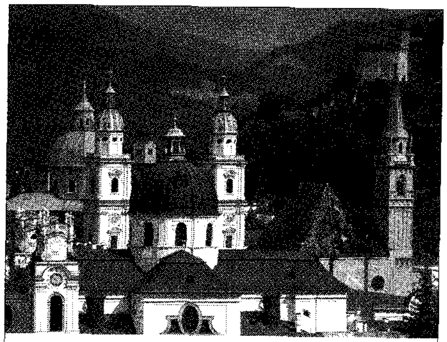
THE day Pronek got fired, he saw a picture on the cover of *Time* of a man in a Serb death camp: the man was standing behind three lines of barbed wire—his skin stretched across his rib cage—and he was careful not to look directly at the camera, as if he didn't know whether it would save his life or get him killed. Pronek mumbled his way to his locker at the Boudin Bakery, a surge of heat pressing up behind his eyes. He put on his cherry-red Boudin Bakery apron and beret and went to empty the trays.

As he was piling them on top of the trash can, he was beckoned by a man wearing a grass-green shirt with a little golfer swinging a golf club over his heart.

Pronek walked over to the man's table and stood there. The man had immaculately combed blond hair and a monstrous gold ring on his pinkie. He pointed at the croissant on his plate.

"I wanted romaine lettuce on my Turkey Dijon. This is iceberg lettuce." Pronek said nothing. "Well, what do you have to say about that?"

Pronek was about to go tell the sandwich person about the problem,



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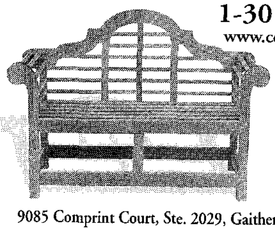

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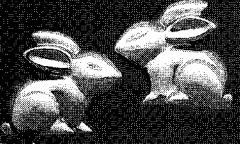

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but for some reason he stopped. He said, "Nothing."

"I'd like my Turkey Dijon with romaine lettuce, please," the man said.

"What's difference?" Pronek said.

"Excuse me?" the man raised his voice, his double chin corrugated in disbelief.

"Romaine lettuce, iceberg lettuce, what's difference?" Pronek said.

"May I talk to someone who can speak English, please?" the man said and pushed his tray away with resolve. Pronek felt pain climbing up his calves, passing through his pelvis, and settling in his stomach as a cramp. He wanted to say something, something clever and devastating, but could not think of any English words that would convey the magnitude of the absurdity, other than "Romaine lettuce, iceberg lettuce, what's difference?" He kept muttering it and wobbled away in the vain hope that the man might just give up. But the man did not give up, and when Dawn walked over to him with the man in tow Pronek had to listen while he ranted. When he finally stopped, Pronek whimpered, "Romaine, iceberg, all same."

"I'm sorry," Dawn said. "But we have to let you go."

"I go," Pronek said. "No problem. I go."

IN the spring of 1993, Pronek discovered, after a complicated series of transactions, involving a Red Cross worker in Sarajevo, a radio operator, a cousin living in France, and Zbisiek, one of the Polish construction workers, who happened to answer the phone, that his parents were on the list for a convoy that would soon leave the city.

"When?" Pronek asked Zbisiek, whose blue eyes, framed by ruptured blood vessels, were moist with Slavic compassion.

"He didn't said it," Zbisiek said.

It was only then that Pronek began to fear for his parents' lives. Suddenly he realized that death was the cessation of life. He watched CNN and saw people with familiar faces crawling in their own blood, begging the camera for help, their stumps spurting. Sometimes, the people who were trying to help them were cut down by sniper fire. Pronek understood that what those people had been doing before that moment—whatever it was—would never continue. Even their suffering would end.

He devoured Snickers and Baby Ruths, followed by bags of Cheerios and Doritos, and he gained weight. He panicked as he walked down the street and realized that he didn't know the names of the trees and flowers around him—they were blank pages in a photo album from which the pictures had been removed. He forced himself to look down at the ground instead: concrete cracks, flat cigarette butts, broken twigs. He wished he were blind. He suffered through an interminable sinus infection. He started mumbling to himself, giggling and growling in response to his own inaudible discourse.

He slept among paint cans, in a noxious mist. The Poles seemed to think he had lost his mind and gave him thirty-three dollars they had collected among themselves. He worked as a parking assistant in a lot near Wrigley Field, revolving his arm like a windmill on game days, until he had a painful epiphany about the absurdity of the job and quit. He began to think of himself as someone else entirely—a cartoon character, a dog, a detective. He stopped desiring women and devoted his sexual life to detached masturbation, not even bothering to fantasize. Afterward, he took long showers, trying to clean himself, then ended them suddenly when he remembered the water shortages in Sarajevo. He was convinced that he stank and that people walked around him on the street and avoided sitting next to him on the El.

IN September, Andrea's father appeared and solemnly informed Pronek that he would soon have to leave the apartment, because it had been sold to a distinguished realtor and they had to finish it as soon as possible. Pronek watched the Poles shrugging their shoulders benevolently behind Andrea's father's back and, numb with despair, announced that he was currently unemployed. Andrea's father told him that his wife ran a cleaning agency called Home Clean Home and offered to help him find a job there.

Pronek had a delightful interview with Andrea's mother. "I know you're a hard worker," she said. "It is people like you who built this great country for us." She patted him on the back and sent him off to the agency supervisor, Stephen Rhee, an ex-marine who promptly informed Pronek that there would be no screwing around with him. He had a crewcut and a bushy mole on his cheek that looked from afar like a tiny bullet wound.

"Dust is our mortal enemy, vacuum cleaners are our AK-47s," Rhee announced as he showed Pronek his locker, which smelled of someone else's sweat.

As a novice, Pronek became a bathroom cleaner, "the

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shit boy." He cleaned slowly, mercilessly effacing all trace of human life. He grew to like doing it; it stopped him from thinking. He focussed instead on stains and hairs, enjoying their steady and inevitable disappearance. His world was reduced to a pimple-pus speck on a mirror which could be quickly wiped away. When he had finished cleaning, he'd emerge from the sparkling bathroom purified, as if his self had changed profoundly while it was away from him.

In this manner, he became a true professional, and his wage rose from six dollars an hour to six-fifty. He had soon earned enough to move to a furnitureless studio apartment in West Rogers Park. Pronek went through all this in an aching daze, occasionally interrupted by involuntary memories. The smell of chlorine brought back his days of cleaning toilets in the Army. When he scrubbed burned grease off a stove, he'd recall walking through Bascarsija, where kebab shops spewed barbecue smoke. Breathing the dust raised by his vacuum cleaner, he remembered how, on Saturday mornings, his mother would make him crawl under the bed to reach the clusters of lint that had gathered against the wall. The lead-and-wood scent of pencil shavings in a wastebasket reminded him of the pencils he had shared with Mirza, his best friend in grammar school.

Eventually, Rhee allowed him to go on solo missions, cleaning Lincoln Park or Gold Coast condos by himself. He liked entering those apartments, where the scent of shower gel and deodorant lingered, and dusting the Ansel Adams photographs of vapid gray deserts and the family pictures on the piano, vacuuming the rugs that stretched across floors like lazy cats, and browsing through the bookshelves filled with titles like "Seven Spiritual Laws of Growth," "What's Inside—A User's Guide to the Soul," "Investing Today," and "The Client." He developed a healthy stable of steady customers, who never saw him but regularly left tips for him under the fruit bowl or on the coffee table.

Sometimes after he had finished cleaning, Pronek would sit in an armchair and imagine his life in that particular condo. He saw himself walking through the door, checking the abundant stack of mail; he'd head for the tall bottle of Scotch and pour himself a generous drink; he'd check the messages—"Hi! Um, this is Andrea, returning your call.... Um, I guess I can squeeze you in next Tuesday.... I kind of like Italian food, I guess." He'd saunter to the closet, still sipping his drink, and hang up his navy-blue jacket; he'd turn on the TV and watch the end of a Bulls game before deciding to drive up to White Pigeon, Michigan, to visit his parents, who he knew would just annoy the hell out of him; then he'd put on some blues ("I'd Rather Go Blind Than See You Walk Away from Me") and slowly drink until he passed out.

Each morning, Pronek would sit on the only chair he owned and eat cereal out of a bowl on his knees while watching a sunbeam climb through the window like a curious squirrel. Every day, he would leave for work at the same time, with a Wonder-bread-and-bologna sandwich, then ride the same clattering train home. Every evening, he'd enter his apartment and wait for a moment before turning on the light, giving the cockroaches a chance to reach a dark corner. He'd check the roach motel, where yesterday's dried-up roach hung from the ceiling and today's was still alive, stuck in sweet glue. "Honey," he'd say, "I'm home."

For months, he watched the same images, which alternated with optimistic car commercials: shots of Karadzic and Milosevic shaking hands; of men with shaved heads walking in long sad columns, escorted by men wearing black ski masks and carrying rifles; of a man waving at a bus, while a woman leaning on the bus's filthy window waved back. Eventually, Pronek would turn off the TV and lie staring at the ceiling fan as it revolved slowly, like an exhausted dragonfly.

And as long as each day was like any other day his life had not ceased. His parents were still alive; they were waiting to get on the convoy, which would leave the city soon and move forward without stopping, until it reached its destination. ♦

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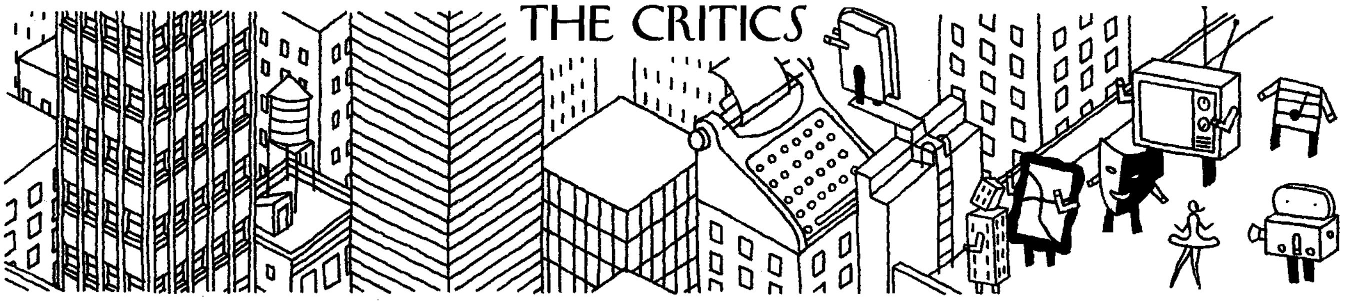


BOOKS

TEA AND SYMPATHY

The truth about American taxpayers.

BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

Late on the night of December 16, 1773, in protest against the British Parliament's Tea Act, a group of American colonists dressed as Mohawk Indians slipped onto three British merchant ships moored in Boston Harbor and threw three hundred and forty-two chests of tea overboard. This was the Boston Tea Party, the most famous of the series of disputes over Colonial taxation which led to the American Revolution, and in the years since that nighttime raid it has served as an irresistible symbol for everything from the property-tax revolts of the nineteen-seventies to the Reagan Revolution of the nineteen-eighties. Conservatives like to think about their opposition to taxes as part of a long, quintessentially American tradition, dating back to that night in Boston Harbor—which is a little strange, since the act that prompted the Boston Tea Party was not a tax increase but, in effect, a tax cut.

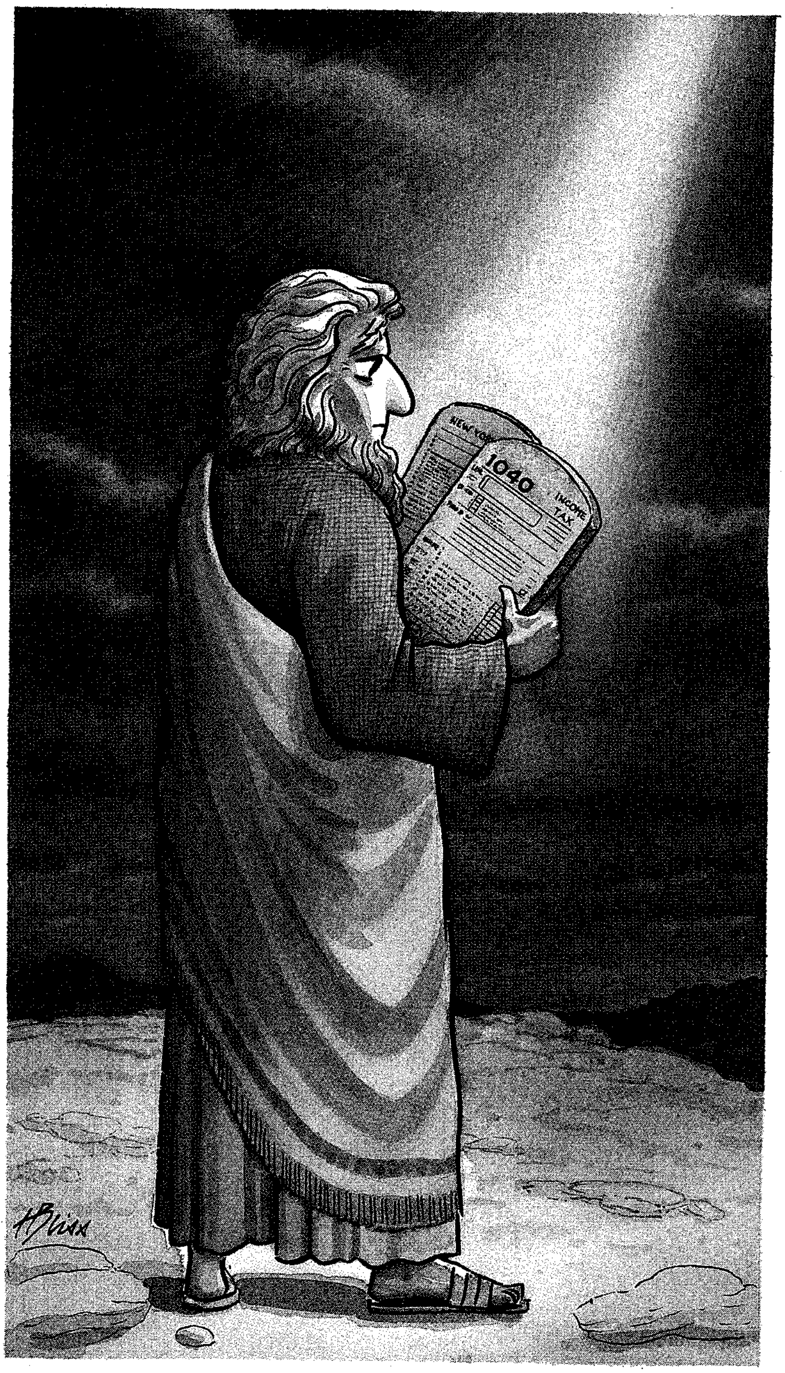
What happened in 1773 was that British import duties on tea in the Colonies had risen so high that the business of the East India Company—the official trading arm of the British Empire—was being badly undercut by smugglers bringing in much cheaper tea from Holland. Parliament's response was the Tea Act, which allowed the company to lower the price of its tea enough to successfully compete against the Dutch contraband. The reaction in the Colonies was immediate. In New York and Philadelphia, the tea-smuggling fraternity, concerned that lucrative business was about to disappear, sent out a cry of alarm. Peter Thomas writes in "Tea Party to Independence," his excellent history of the American Revolution, that "to win popular support they"—the smugglers—"launched a propaganda campaign based on two alleged dangers to the whole colonial community, that the East India Company would expand its tea monopoly into one of all foreign trade, and that the whole project was a ministerial scheme to trick Americans into acceptance of taxed tea." The anti-British-tea forces held mass meetings and distributed pamphlets. In Boston, a resolution was passed declaring that anyone who imported taxed tea to the Colonies would be "deemed an enemy to his own country." In December, when the first shipment of cheap British tea arrived, the town's patriots took action.

You can make the case—and many American historians do—that, despite the self-interested motives of the smugglers, there was a legitimate concern at the root of the colonists' complaint: British economic interests were becoming inimical to their own, and they were being coerced into paying a tax imposed without their political consent. But it's very hard to make the argument that the colonists had a legitimate grievance over the *level* of British taxation. The taxes paid by the colonists were a fraction of those paid by British taxpayers. And the British had borne most of the financial brunt of the recently completed Seven Years' War, even though that war, by clearing the French out of North America, had principally benefitted the Colonies. According to the historian Oliver Dickerson, many British taxpayers quite rightly considered the Americans to be tax freeloaders. Yet somehow this part of the story has been forgotten. In fact, to listen to some of the contemporary rhetoric about the Colonial experience is to wonder whether the anti-tax conservatives have got the two sides in the Boston Tea Party mixed up. The British, after all, were simply pursuing a strategy that Ronald Reagan later made famous: they were trying to raise tax revenue by cutting taxes. They were the first supply-siders. The colonists, meanwhile, were essentially making a fair-trade-practices complaint, which is the kind of peevish, small-nation behavior that free traders are always rolling their eyes at.

This may seem like a historical quibble, and in some sense it is. But the distortions that mark the historical interpretation of the Colonial tax battles turn out to be the very same distortions that mark the discussion of contemporary tax policy. Republican leaders are at the moment committed either to a flat tax or to a major tax cut—ranging anywhere from ten to thirty per cent—even though polls show that the Americans who support tax cuts are vastly outnumbered by those who want to see the budget surplus devoted to debt reduction and Social Security. This is the Tea Party fallacy—the unshakable belief that Americans, despite what they may say to the contrary, care only that their taxes are as low as possible. The truth is not, and has never been, as simple as that. Sometimes we think that high taxes are corrosive of liberty. But there are also times when we are more concerned about who is taxing us, or how we are being taxed, or where the tax proceeds are going, and when we would rather be given the benefits of government for nothing and stiff our neighbors with the bill. In the pursuit of social and political goals, there are even times when we may be willing to give up things, such as tea, that might have otherwise seemed a bargain. Taxes are the means by which human beings determine the extent of their obligations to each other and to their government. It's hard to imagine how such a process could ever be straightforward. Why do so many conservatives think that it can?

AMITY SHLAES, an editorial writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, has written a new book, entitled "The Greedy Hand" (Random House; $22.95), which lays out the conservative position on taxation. Shlaes thinks that our tax system frustrates and distorts the quality of every aspect of American life, including shopping, marriage, homeowning, education, and retirement. She wants sharply reduced progressivity—maybe even a flat tax—and a tax code that is explicitly neutral on matters of social policy. Parts of the book—like Shlaes' chapter on marriage—are very good. She points out that as long as the tax system remains progressive it is probably impossible to satisfy all sides in the "marriage penalty" dispute. Progressivity is what allows you to reward traditional families, since a husband can file jointly with his non-working wife and, by splitting his paycheck, lower the family tax bracket. But progressivity is also what creates the marriage penalty when both partners work, because their combined incomes subject them to a higher tax bracket. In other words, once you start using the tax system to promote certain kinds of social outcomes (social equity, the traditional family), you inevitably penalize other, equally positive outcomes.

Shlaes' arguments are tied together by a basic principle. She thinks that for taxes to be fair and acceptable there has to be a direct and simple connection between the taxpayer and the tax. She devotes an entire chapter, for example, to how the growing complexity of the tax code has forced Americans to rely more and more on accountants to prepare their taxes. "Walking down Main Street," she writes, "citizens are four times more likely to encounter an H & R Block office than they are to encounter the Gap," a ubiquity she calls "disconcerting." Our reliance on accountants is "evidence of our weakness in the face of the greedy hand." Our personal connection to the tax system has been severed, she believes. The system has become depersonalized.



In the same vein, Shlaes is sharply critical of the attempts by some states, like Vermont, to even out the discrepancy between what wealthy towns and poor towns can afford to spend on their school systems. In the process known as equalization, towns forward their property-tax revenues to the statehouse, where the money is divided up equally and sent back to each town in the form of student vouchers. Shlaes thinks that equalization is a terrible idea. A critical element of what makes public schools successful and what makes citizens willing to pay for them, she says, is that they are locally funded. She thinks that property taxes are "good" taxes. "People who pay property taxes for schools they control see what they are getting; if they like it, they push to 'buy more,' and pass or tolerate tax increases. If they don't like it, they will try to 'buy' less from government by pushing for a tax cut."

This insistence that taxation be simple and politically accountable sounds very much in the spirit of the American Revolution. The American Revolutionaries, Shlaes says, started a "conversation" about taxes, and she sees her book as continuing that dialogue. Even her title, "The Greedy Hand," is taken from Thomas Paine. As Shlaes explains her positions, however, it becomes obvious that she is as misguided by the Tea Party fallacy as anyone else. What, for example, is so worrisome about the rise of the tax specialist? We rely on specialists in every aspect of modern life: to fix our cars and clean our teeth and debug our software and help us lower our high blood pressure. But that isn't a mark of the depersonalization of modern life; it's a sign of the intensely personalized nature of modern life. If every person's car or every person's heart worked in exactly the same way, we wouldn't need mechanics and we wouldn't need doctors: there would be just one set of rules that everyone could follow.

The same is true of the tax code. It is increasingly complicated because our lives are increasingly complicated—because more of us now than ever before have more than one source of income, get divorced, move, have multiple investments, own more than one house—and the tax code seeks to take account of that complexity. Shlaes is a fan of the flat tax. But if there was ever an impersonal tax the flat tax is it. At least the architects of the current income-tax system, whatever their flaws, have the decency to understand that taxes are not just the measure of what we ought to pay our government but also the measure of what, at the time we file our return, we are capable of paying.

Nor is it clear why property taxes are such "good" taxes, in the way that Shlaes makes them out to be. They may be locally administered, but, unlike income taxes, they are notoriously insensitive to the ups and downs of people's lives. If you lose your job or retire, you may still pay the same property tax that you did when you were in your peak earning years. More important, in an era, like ours, of increasing income segregation, the property tax starts to have the paradoxical effect of being the least burdensome on rich people and the most burdensome on poor people. Suppose, for instance, that a town of ten houses requires, for its annual budget, a hundred thousand dollars in local tax revenue. If the houses in the town are valued at a million dollars each, then a property tax of one per cent will raise the necessary funds. If the houses are valued at a hundred thousand dollars, however, then, for the town to survive, the property-tax rate has to rise to ten per cent. This is an abstract example, but it is exactly what happened to many older American cities after the white middle class left them for the suburbs. A rich suburban community can provide very generous services with very low property taxes, which in turn serves as a magnet for other well-off people. But as those people leave their old neighborhoods, and property values fall there in consequence, the city has to raise property taxes even higher in order to provide the same level of services, which drives out even more middle-class people, and on and on in a downward spiral. It is no coincidence that New Haven, Connecticut, and Newark, New Jersey—two very poor towns that were ravaged by white flight in the nineteen-sixties and are surrounded today by much wealthier suburbs—have some of the highest property-tax rates in the country. Obviously, it is suicidal for troubled

FITTING

Her son had ordered suits that were
extravagant for someone his age.
He asked her to come along,
to see the fabrics.
High in the midtown building
were chairs, gentlemen's magazines,
loose bolts of cloth, even a kind of bar.
She took coffee, sat in her sneakers.
The boy went to a table where there were
many beautiful ties. He touched
one, held it up, smiled, then followed
a fitter to an inner room.

The owner chatted with the woman.
A small man, with hair like white silk,
he talked of his craft.
She thought of Verrocchio—his time.
The room grew rich with folds, shapes,
curves, stitches, linings, buttons—
centuries of the smell and architecture
of men, centuries of kept skills,
quieter, more venerable
than the dressing of women.

They said her son was ready.
Would she care to come and look?
He asked her to see
the basted pieces in the light:
the thin cobalt line in the black,
a rose thread woven in the gray.
He wanted to be sure—
they weren't too lavish, were they?

—Siri von Reis

cities like these to have such high property taxes, since few people who would take the risk of gentrifying an old neighborhood will do so if they have to take a tax hit as well. Yet the only way those cities could afford to lower their property taxes would be to cut back on the very services—education, policing, garbage collection, parks—that would-be gentrifiers would demand. The heavy reliance of both Connecticut and New Jersey on the property tax to fund local services has put New Haven and Newark in a poverty trap.

There are ways to get around this problem, of course. The federal government can send aid directly to the affected areas, local services can be funded with income taxes (or, in the case of Michigan, sales taxes), or states can do what Shlaes so dislikes; namely, enforce some kind of property-tax equalization. All these measures make the tax system more sensitive to individual differences, and make it more accurately reflect the complex contemporary realities of segregation and urban poverty. But they also have the effect of making the tax code more complicated, not more simple, and more centralized, not local. Shlaes is wedded to the nostalgic notion that we should be able to sit down on the evening of April 14th and fill out our returns, then wake up the next morning and watch our tax dollars at work. "Property taxes have always been important to Americans," she writes, and then adds, "This has been true since the days of the colonies." But she has misinterpreted what the colonists actually wanted. They wanted, above all else, taxes that were relevant to their lives. If John Hancock and Samuel Adams were alive today, it's not hard to imagine them donning war paint and protesting in favor of equalization.

EVERY year for the past seven years, the Kennedy School of Government, at Harvard University, and the office of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan have jointly released a small book entitled "The Federal Budget and the States." The book is devoted to a very simple question: What are the differences between the amount the citizens of each state in the Union pay in federal income taxes and the amount they get back from Washington in fed-

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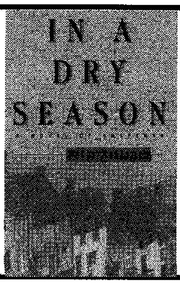

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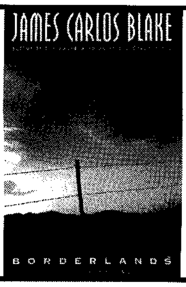

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BRIEFLY NOTED

Freedom Song, by Amit Chaudhuri (Knopf; $24). These three novellas, now published for the first time in the United States, are atmospheric rather than narrative, relying on an abundance of particulars to immerse the reader in the daily rhythms of their characters' lives. Chaudhuri is a lush prose stylist; whether he is writing about a boy's first encounter with death during a visit to Calcutta or an indecisive lover at Oxford, he effortlessly creates what one man calls, referring to the sight of his dozing mother, "a silent composition of loved details."

Spinners, by Anthony McCarten (Morrow; $24). The charm of this New Zealand novel lies, amazingly, in its unswallowable premise: "Delia Chapman saw a spaceman. Well, that wasn't quite true. She saw ten of them." Throughout this tale of bumbling yokels, a tone of affectionate amusement prevails: Delia's teen-age peers are jealous of her notoriety, and every man who sees even a picture of her wants her, including the new town librarian whom, as readers, we can't help but love and root for.

Three Worlds of Michelangelo, by James H. Beck (Norton; $25.95). This biography balances the breezy style of contemporary accounts by Vasari and Condivi with the accumulated knowledge of scholarly investigation. Beck vividly renders Renaissance Florence and Rome, guiding us through Michelangelo's training, colleagues, probable influences, and personal relationships: with his father, Lodovico Buonarroti, who tried to beat the desire to paint out of his son; with Lorenzo de' Medici, Michelangelo's first patron; and with Pope Julius II, who commissioned his greatest work. If at times Beck gets a bit conjectural, the payoff is his evocation of the living artist, "neither painter nor sculptor, overcoming the boundaries of medium."

The Condor's Shadow, by David S. Wilcove (Freeman; $24.95). Settlement and expansion on this continent has always meant the devastation of whole populations of animals. Wilcove presents an informed, well-told portrait of what he calls "the cycles of loss and recovery" of wildlife in America. Although his narrative describes the decimation of once common species, like the now extinct passenger pigeon, what emerges from this book is a sense of nature's recuperative power whenever humans allow it to prevail.

Another Ghost in the Doorway, by Deborah Pease (Moyer Bell; $24.95). Pease's poems, often quiet and contemplative, are most compelling when they investigate a natural world of "mutinous beauty." One poem describes an idyllic summer landscape as if it were a battlefield: "Grasshoppers detonate tonelessly, / Papery shrapnel." In another, a sidewalk "glistens with cheery treachery." The most energetic parts of this collection argue that it is "better to be in the thick of it, / Grounded by danger."

eral contracts and transfer payments? The book's conclusions are quite incendiary. The gap between the states that get the most money back and the states that get the least, for example, is enormous. New Mexico, one of the big winners, gets three thousand four hundred and sixty-four dollars more per capita from the federal government than it pays in taxes. The average person in last-place Connecticut, on the other hand, pays out two thousand two hundred and seventy-two dollars more in taxes than he or she gets back from Washington. What's more, the states that get more than they give—New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Florida, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, among others—represent the political bedrock of the Republican Party, allegedly the party of small government and self-reliance, while the states that support the rest of the country are the Democratic strongholds of the Midwest and the Northeast. "The Federal Budget and the States" suggests that when it comes to taxation we've been asking the wrong questions. We've been so consumed by our Tea Party fantasies about the size of the tax burden that we've neglected the much more politically and socially critical issue of the distribution of that burden.

Consider, for example, the biggest losers in the tax game—Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Michigan, California, and Connecticut. Collectively, they sent eighty-two and a half billion dollars more to Washington in 1997 than they received. Except for Michigan, these are all states with very high costs of living, where state income taxes, local sales and property taxes, and other miscellaneous levies are among the heaviest in the country. The conventional explanation for this—at least, among conservatives—is that these are states where spendthrift liberalism, financial mismanagement, and unnecessary regulations have created an onerous burden for their citizens. But isn't it fairer to say that they probably have such heavy tax burdens because they are forced to give away so much of their wealth to Washington?

The residents of New York City alone, for example, run a surplus with Washington that may be as high as ten billion dollars a year. You can argue that New York City ought to subsidize the rest of the country, because there are so many wealthy people here. Then again this is a city with a million and a half people on Medicaid, a crumbling infrastructure, and billions of dollars of debt. Meanwhile, the states where the wealth generated in New York City is going—such as Utah, North Carolina, and Tennessee—are in many cases in much better economic health than the regions bailing them out. If Congress were to give New York City even half of that ten-billion-dollar annual surplus back, in the form of the kind of urban grants that the present Congress seems to have forgotten about, the city might be able to get rid of its income tax, build the desperately needed Second Avenue subway line, repair the Brooklyn Bridge, and address any number of its other pressing needs.

The second—and equally interesting—possibility suggested by the Moynihan report is that one of the reasons that places like New York generate so much wealth is *precisely because* they are high-tax states. Imagine two identical clothing stores, one based in a suburban mall and the other in midtown Manhattan. The local tax burden on the mall store is typically very low, and with good reason, because the amount of public investment needed to keep that store in business is almost nonexistent. A developer built the mall, customers drive to it in their own cars, and the mall's management company empties the trash, sweeps the floors of the common areas, and pays the security guards who police the building. At the same time, however, malls tend to serve fairly thinly populated suburban areas, which means that pedestrian traffic in a typical mall is so light that our clothing store probably yields sales of up to only seven hundred dollars a year per square foot.

The population density in New York City, on the other hand, is such that our hypothetical clothing store might have sales of up to two thousand dollars per square foot. This means that the store owner now pays himself a much higher salary—which translates into more income tax for the federal government. But, this being New York, he also has

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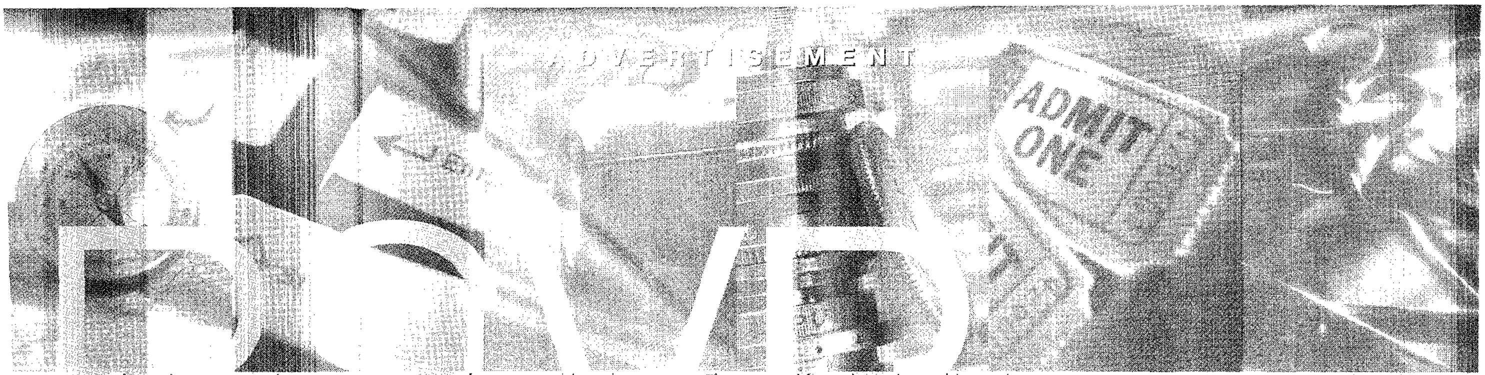

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9 TRO(u)T
11 NURSE (anag.)
12 REIGN (*rain* hom.)
14 RAWER (hidden)
16 NICER (*rec* + *in* rev.)
18 DRAW (rev.)
19 GU(A)M
20 ESTONIA (anag.)
21 ADHESION (anag.)

DOWN

1 RE(M)BRANDT (*Bertrand* anag.)
2 DEMI(t)
3 WRONG (anag.)
4 N + ARROW
5 GLOSSES (2 defs.)
7 STEERSMAN (anag.)
10 RE-TIRED (pun)
13 IN CAS + H
15 (w)AR(GO)S
17 MUN + I (*num.* rev.)

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For more information, log on to www.newyorkermarketingsite.com to pay his staff more. He pays more for rent and deliveries and insurance and garbage collection. Most of all, he pays more in taxes, because almost every service the Manhattan store depends on for its survival—subways and buses, clean and well-lit streets, the police—is provided by the local government. In fact, that very expensive public infrastructure is what makes having a store in Manhattan so lucrative: the subways and buses allow millions of people to move efficiently in a very small space; the street lights make it inviting around the clock; the huge police force keeps shoppers safe; and so on.

Here, in other words, are two very different economic models. The mall store needs only a modest public investment but yields only a modest amount of revenue to the tax man. The Manhattan store requires a major public investment, but it generates an extraordinary amount of revenue in return, both for the local government and for Washington. The experience is very different for customers as well. The goods in the mall store are probably a bit cheaper. In Manhattan, on the other hand, the selection is probably better, and if you don't like what you see in our hypothetical store there are probably a dozen other clothing stores nearby that you would never find in a mall that might offer something better or less expensive.

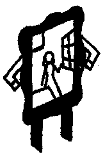
The point is not that one way is necessarily better than the other. It's simply that under certain circumstances a high-tax environment can make as much economic sense for merchants and shoppers as a low-tax environment. Our political system, however, does not appear to recognize this fact. When tax conservatives come along and say that the true economic issue in this country is the high tax burden—and when they follow that up by refusing to return to New York City the tax dollars it needs to keep its economic engine running—what they are essentially saying is that they believe only in the mall and not in Manhattan. To those of us who would rather not do our shopping in malls and who choose to live in places like Manhattan, that kind of single-minded policy represents a grave threat to our way of life. There are times when the low-tax option is not the best option. The colonists understood that. If only conservatives would as well. ♦

THE ART WORLD

OUT OF THE ATTIC

The Met revives its Greek galleries.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

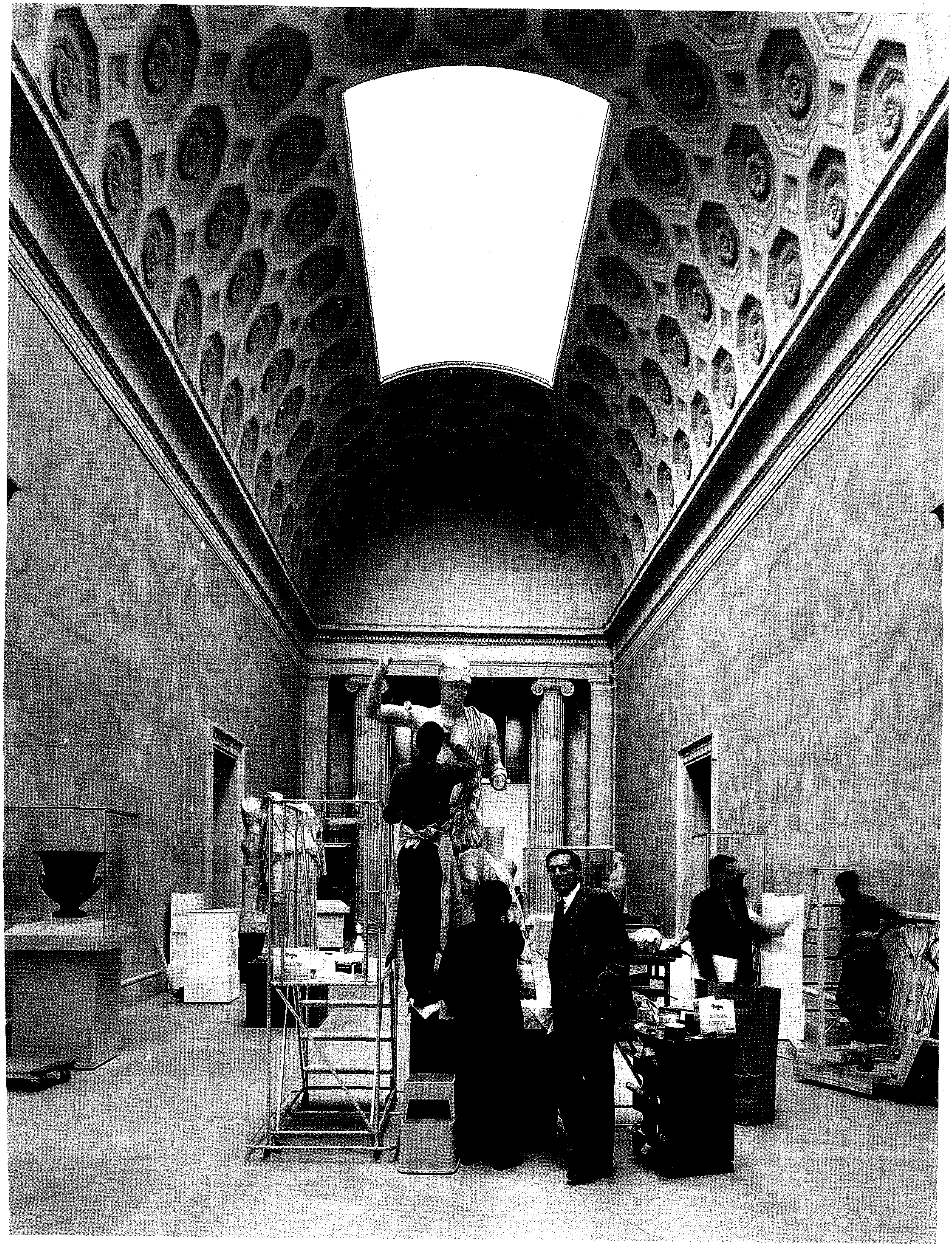


THE centerpiece of the Metropolitan Museum's totally redesigned galleries of Greek art, which open to the public on April 20th, is a vaulted, Beaux-Arts sculpture hall whose grandeur has been invisible for half a century. The room is a hundred and forty feet long by twenty-seven feet wide. From three soaring light wells that have been cut into the coffered ceiling, natural light cascades down the limestone-sheathed walls and bathes the monumental marble sculptures, Roman copies of lost bronze originals: the Protesilaos, the first Greek warrior to set foot on Trojan soil at the outset of the Trojan War; the Wounded Amazon; the Diadoumenos, a young athlete tying a victory ribbon around his perfect head. Set on high pedestals at well-spaced intervals, these familiar yet nearly forgotten works signify more than the revival of a space that had been until recently a rather dismal corridor lined with Pompeian paintings and Cypriot statues that nobody looked at. They announce the restoration of Greek and Roman art to its long-lost celebrity status at the nation's greatest museum.

It used to be said that the Metropolitan's trustees never met without buying a Greek pot. That was before the First World War, when the museum was trying to catch up with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in the field of classical antiquities. The Met caught up by playing financial hardball. It lured away the three men who had built Boston's classical collection and virtually cornered the European market for Greek and Roman art: Edward Perry Warren, a wealthy American collector living in London; John Marshall, Warren's scholarly English buying agent; and Edward Robinson, the Boston museum's director, who left in 1905 to become assistant director of the Met. From 1905 until about 1917, this team channelled a steady stream of world-class bronzes, marbles, pottery, engraved gems, terracottas, and other ancient artifacts to the New York museum.

Two new wings were set aside for Greek and Roman art in the Met's 1912 expansion plans. The classical department, stretching all the way from the Fifth Avenue entrance hall, at Eighty-second Street, to the south end of the building, at Eightieth Street, was allotted as much space as the Egyptian department, on the other side of the main hall. Robinson, who had kept the title of curator of classical antiquities when he moved up from assistant director to director of the museum, in 1910, worked very closely with the architect Charles McKim, of McKim, Mead & White, on the design of these spaces. The long, vaulted hall, which they envisaged as the greatest sculpture gallery in America, was modelled on the Braccio Nuovo of the Vatican Museums, which in turn was modelled on the public baths of ancient Rome, where senators and other white males walked and discoursed among marble copies of Greek statues. Robinson installed pottery and smaller objects in the large galleries on either side of the great hall, and he continued his grand classical scheme with a Roman atrium court and garden at the south end. His goal was, as he put it, "to show Greek and Roman works of art in something like the setting and atmosphere in which they were seen in antiquity."

The First World War interrupted Robinson's building plans. Supplies of French limestone for the walls of the vaulted gallery became unavailable, and then, after the war, funds ran short and corners had to be cut. The classical department (it was renamed the Greek



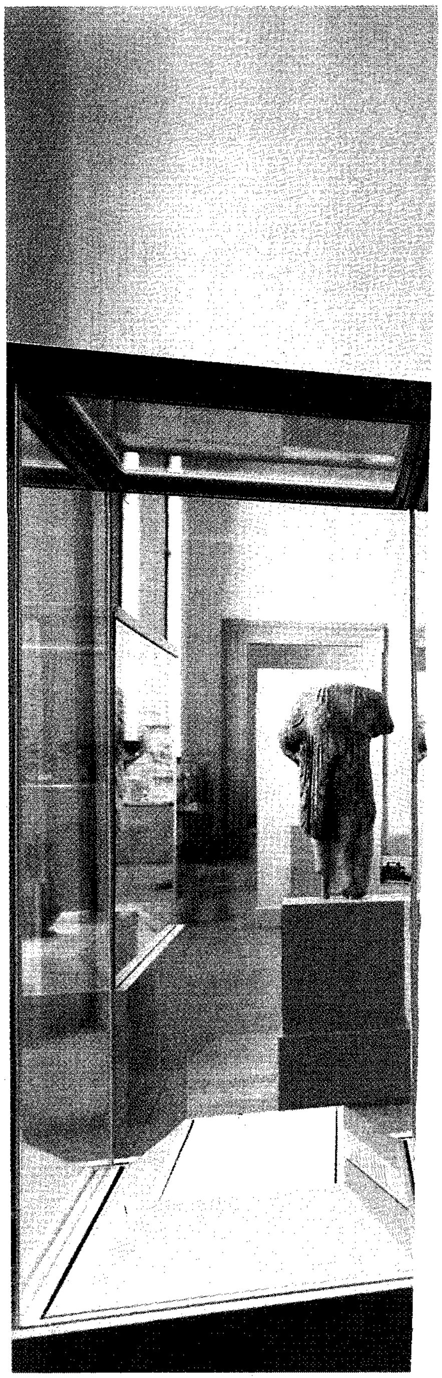
Philippe de Montebello, the Met's director, in the grandly restored sculpture hall. Photographs by Robert Polidori.

and Roman department in 1935) never got the degree of trustee support that built the Egyptian department, whose archeological expeditions went out every year to the Valley of the Kings and sent back hundreds of tons of excavated material. Important Greek and Roman objects nevertheless continued to enter the collection: magnificent examples of black-figure and red-figure pottery, early bronzes, engraved gems and jewelry, and an impressive number of original Greek grave reliefs and marble sculptures, including a sixth-century-B.C. statue of a kouros, or nude youth, that is one of the earliest such figures to have survived intact. By 1940, the Met owned the finest collection of archaic Greek sculptures outside Athens. Its other Greek and Roman holdings are unsurpassed in this hemisphere, but to the average visitor this was never readily apparent, partly because Robinson's curatorial successors lacked a gift for imaginative presentation. Germanic scholarship prevailed: works were segregated by material (clay, metal, glass, stone, etc.) in unchanging exhibits, and over time the sculptures came to look as dull and lifeless as the Greek pots lined up in badly lit cases. The real crusher came in 1948, when Francis Henry Taylor, the Metropolitan's fifth director, took away nearly half of the Greek and Roman department's space. A medievalist by training and an iconoclast by temperament, Taylor turned the Roman court and garden into a large and rather ugly public restaurant. The most glorious sculpture gallery in America, its skylights blacked out during the war and never uncovered, became a dark corridor on the way to lunch.

Now, fifty years later, retribution is at hand. A preview of what to expect came in 1996, with the reopening of the Robert and Renée Belfer Court of Prehistoric to Early Greek Art, just off the main entrance hall. This was Phase I of the Greek and Roman department's three-phase, hundred-and-fifty-million-dollar renovation project, and it was an eye-opener: never before had the museum's Cycladic figurines, Geometric-style vases, engraved gems, and other early objects been displayed with such clarity, wit, and verve. In Phase III, which will not be finished until two or three years into the new millennium, the restaurant is to move out and the entire south end of this wing will be reconverted to art—Greek art of the Hellenistic period, from 323 B.C. to the late first century B.C., and Etruscan and Roman art up to the fall of the Roman Empire. Right now, the entire museum is in a swivet over the completion of Phase II: the long sculpture gallery and its six nobly proportioned side galleries (three on each side), where the arts of Greek civilization at its zenith, from the sixth through the fourth century B.C., finally get the setting they deserve.

Carlos Picón, the curator in charge of Greek and Roman art, was visibly battling hubris when he took me through the still unfinished spaces a week or so ago. Relatively young (he is forty-four), and bursting with encyclopedic energy, Picón was brought in nine years ago by Philippe de Montebello, the Met's director, to plan and carry out the department's rebirth, and he is clearly a man in love with his job. We stood in the Judy and Michael H. Steinhardt Gallery of Archaic Greek Sculpture (each of the new galleries is named for a donor, natch), gazing up at the New York kouros, the famous nude youth whose rigid frontality derives from Egyptian art but whose intensity and forward-moving stance foreshadow the tremendous changes that were soon to come. The marble had a vibrant, pinkish cast I hadn't noticed before. "When the kouros was being cleaned," Picón told me, "I asked the conservators why it was so gray. It looked to me like more than normal dirt. They checked, and found that it was coated with particles of rubber, from automobile tires, which had been seeping in for decades through the imperfectly sealed windows on Fifth Avenue. Now, finally, these galleries are climate-controlled, so that won't happen again."

Not far from the kouros, a draped female figure caught the raking sunlight from a tall window. "Look at our kore," Picón said proudly, pointing out her long hair and the rounded curve of her buttocks. "That is one of the best backsides in Greek art, and nobody has ever *seen* it! Early Greek works can look so contemporary, because of their naïveté, their joie de vivre, and their spirit of discovery." In this gallery, the smaller objects are displayed thematically. Each state-of-the-art vitrine is devoted to a different aspect of Greek life—warfare, the symposium, death and the afterlife—and in each there is a mixture of vases, bronzes, glass, and other artifacts. "It's a totally different approach to the display of antiquities," said Philippe de Montebello, who had just joined us. (Like many others at the museum, the director has kept finding reasons to check on the installation.) "Instead of galleries of vases, galleries of bronzes, galleries of stone sculpture, we now have a transversal cut through the civilization." Before leaving, de Montebello



The famous sixth-century-B

e of a kouros, or nude boy, one of the earliest such figures to survive, dominates the new Archaic Greek sculpture gallery.

did succumb briefly to hubris. "This is a major statement," he pronounced, "one of the most important in the history of this institution and the history of museology."

O.K., why not? It is also a tribute to the curatorial art, which is not as well understood as it ought to be. To take great works of art that have been around for a long time (some of them in storage, to be sure) and to give them fresh life and to give us a sense of how they served the culture that produced them—this takes more than money, science, and carpentry. The silence of objects in museums has been overstated. Ideally, an endless conversation goes on between these objects, and between each object and every viewer, and the curator's art is to make the potential conversation a real one.

In the three galleries on the other side of the sculpture hall, the basis for display is stylistic, not thematic. Here are cases devoted to the great vase painters and their schools, from Lydos and Exekias and the Amasis Painter, in the sixth century B.C., through Euphronius and other fifth-century masters of the red-figure style, to later artists whose work was influenced by the motifs and friezes of the Parthenon. Picón's installation, which he planned and carried out with the collaboration of de Montebello and Jeffrey Daly, the museum's chief designer, is didactic but un-boring. There is plenty of space in the vitrines for the objects to breathe and interact. From where I stood in the doorway to the center gallery, a small object in a case at the far end of the room caught my eye. It was a kylix, the label told me when we got there, a shallow drinking cup on which an artist known as the Villa Giulia Painter had inscribed the full-length image of a goddess in a long, pleated gown. The lady holds a phiale, a ritual vessel for pouring libations. Near her, in the same case, Picón pointed out an actual fourth-century silver phiale with floral decorations on the underside. The juxtaposition of ancient object and painted image, whose exquisite economy of line made me think of Matisse, was oddly moving. "The main thing is curiosity," Picón said airily. "If you don't give life to curiosity, you haven't done your job." ◆

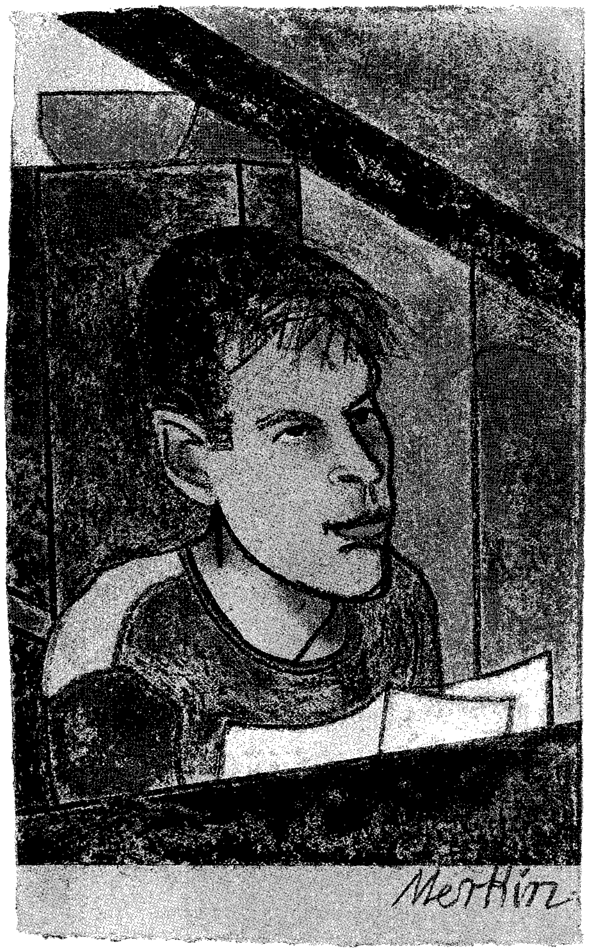
JAZZ

THE NATURAL

He always leaves something to remember him by.

BY WHITNEY BALLIETT

THERE is a secret emotional center in jazz which has sustained the music since it outgrew its early melodic and rhythmic gaucheries, in the late twenties. This center, a kind of aural elixir, reveals itself when an improvised phrase or an entire solo or even a complete number catches you by surprise and sends tremors up your spine. When these lyrical bursts happen in night clubs or at concerts, their lovely afterimages inevitably fade. Caught on recordings, though, they last forever. So here, in no particular order, are some classic recorded beauties: the first twelve or so bars of Louis Armstrong's second solo on both takes of "Some of These Days," played in a revolving half time in his low register and unlike anything else he ever recorded (Columbia; 1929); the eerie, almost surrealistic melody that Paul Gonsalves fashions on the first bridge of a "Caravan" done with Duke Ellington (Fantasy; 1962); Charlie Parker's stunning two-chorus solo on "Funky Blues," replete with an opening now-listen preaching figure, a shivering, sotto-voce run at the start of the second chorus, and a dodging, ascending climactic figure (Verve; 1952); the cluster of soft, keening notes that Joe Lovano plays near the end of "Lament for M," a dirge by Gunther Schuller written in memory of his wife for "Rushhour" (Blue Note; 1995); the Sidney de Paris–Ben Webster–Vic Dickenson–James P. Johnson–Sid Catlett "After You've Gone," certainly as close to a flawless jazz recording as exists (Blue Note; 1944); and all of the remarkable pianist Bill Charlap's "Turnaround," an Ornette Coleman blues that he fills with huge, stuttering chords and sailing-along-the-tonal-edge single-note lines (Criss Cross; 1995).



Bill Charlap is a lyrical repository.

Indeed, Charlap is a lyrical repository. At thirty-two, he is the best, but least well known, of a swarm of gifted pianists who have appeared in New York in the past ten years or so. He has already filled much of the sizable space once occupied by Bill Evans, who still reverberates almost twenty years after his death. Unlike many of the younger pianists, whose tastes tend to be parochial, Charlap has absorbed every pianist worth listening to in the past fifty years, starting with Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson, Duke Ellington, Jimmy Rowles, Erroll Garner, Nat Cole, and Oscar Peterson, then moving through Bud Powell, Thelonious Monk, Hank Jones, Tommy Flanagan, and Bill Evans, and finishing with Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, and Kenny Barron. His ballad numbers are unique. He may start with the verse of the song, played ad lib, then move into the melody chorus. He does not rhapsodize. Instead, he improvises immediately, rearranging the chords and the melody line, and using a relaxed, almost implied beat. He may pause for a split second at the end of this chorus and launch a nodding, swinging single-note solo chorus, made up of irregularly placed notes—some off the beat and some behind the beat—followed by connective runs, and note clusters. He closes with a brief, calming recap of the melody. His ballads are meditations on songs, homages to their composers and lyricists. He constantly reins in his up-tempo numbers. He has a formidable technique, but he never shows off, even though he will let loose epic runs, massive staccato chords, racing upper-register tintinnabulations, and, once in a while, some dazzling counterpoint, his hands pitted against each other. His sound shines; each note is rounded. Best of all, in almost every number, regardless of its speed, he leaves us a phrase, a group of irregular notes, an ardent bridge that shakes us.

CHARLAP has a narrow, handsome face, attentive eyes, and a direct, ready-to-laugh voice. He talks fast, and when he talks about his music he gradually accelerates. Here is what he said recently: "I don't ever remember not playing the piano. Everything was by ear at first, and I'd pick out everything I heard. When a teacher came to the house, I'd charm my way through the lesson. It was very painful and slow for me to learn to read music. The songs of Arlen, Gershwin, Porter, and Berlin were paramount in my house, so jazz is about vocalism for me. Even a drum is vocal. To me, there are three steps in improvisation. The first involves the player's concentration, his heavy thinking. In the second, he becomes almost blasé, and he lets his fingers do the walking. And in the third he is detached from what he is doing. He's moving the pawns of the music, yet he has become a listener, who's, like, sitting there and watching what he's doing. From this stage, you go on to experience that supreme feeling, that omnipotent feeling at the heart of improvising."

Charlap knocks out both his musical contemporaries and his musical elders, some of whom are almost twice his age. The matchless bassist Michael Moore made a tight duo album with Charlap in 1995 (Concord), and has said of him, "So many players of Bill Charlap's generation haven't digested Jimmy Rowles, maybe haven't even heard of him, one of the greatest pianists. A lot of the young piano players today take themselves so seriously that sometimes their solos turn into complete piano concertos. They eat everything on the musical table and leave nothing for anyone else. But Bill goes right through each tune to the bone. He has a great imagination, and he has lightness and humor, even the pratfall kind of humor. We played a kind of Mafia Christmas party a while back, and when the guests sang the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' Bill played something totally different behind each person. He did Stockhausen behind a guy who couldn't carry a tune, and he played the 'St. Louis Blues' behind a woman who thought she could sing."

The guitarist Gene Bertoncini is another Charlap admirer. He was part of a spectacular trio that included Charlap and the bassist Sean Smith and drew S.R.O. crowds on a 1996 jazz cruise on the S.S. Norway. (Selections from the trio's three spacious performances are available on a Chiaroscuro CD, "Gene Bertoncini with Bill Charlap and Sean Smith.") "What I admire, aside from his playing, is his incredible knowledge of songs," Bertoncini said recently. "Whenever I work with him, he'll say, 'Gene, have you heard this song from 1947, or this song from 1938?' So in that way, although he's only thirty-two, he's an old man."

BORN on East Fifty-first Street, in New York, Charlap grew up in a musical and theatrical atmosphere. His mother is the singer Sandy Stewart, and his father, who died when Charlap was seven, was the songwriter Moose Charlap. Moose wrote most of the music, with Carolyn Leigh, for the Mary Martin "Peter Pan" that was on Broadway in the mid-fifties. And he wrote the music, with Eddie Lawrence, for a still lamented 1965 musical called "Kelly," which got terrific reviews in Philadelphia but was disastrously fiddled with at the last minute by its producers and closed in New York after one night. Lawrence has said, "Moose loved to laugh, and he loved to sing. He had a gravelly, wonderful voice—a rough kind of thing, like Aznavour. When he died, we were working on a musical about Paul Gauguin." Bill Charlap went to the Town School and to the High School for Performing Arts when it was still in a dilapidated building on West Forty-sixth Street. He spent a year or two at SUNY-Purchase, and he studied classical piano, but, he says, "My classical piano was not authentic. I was speaking classical piano with a jazz accent. A teacher I had asked me why I played everything with street rhythms." Gerry Mulligan hired Charlap in the late eighties, and he has since divided his time between his own trio and random gigs abroad and with the Phil Woods Quintet.

You have to search for Charlap in New York. He did four nights at the Knickerbocker Bar & Grill, on University Place, in January, and he was at Zinno, on West Thirteenth Street, with his trio—Peter Washington on bass and Kenny Washington on drums—for five days, in March. The gig at the Knickerbocker was hard work. Most people go

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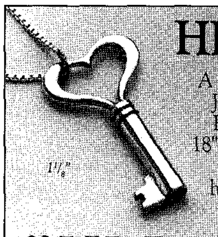

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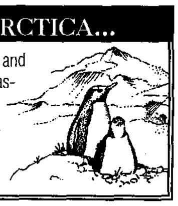

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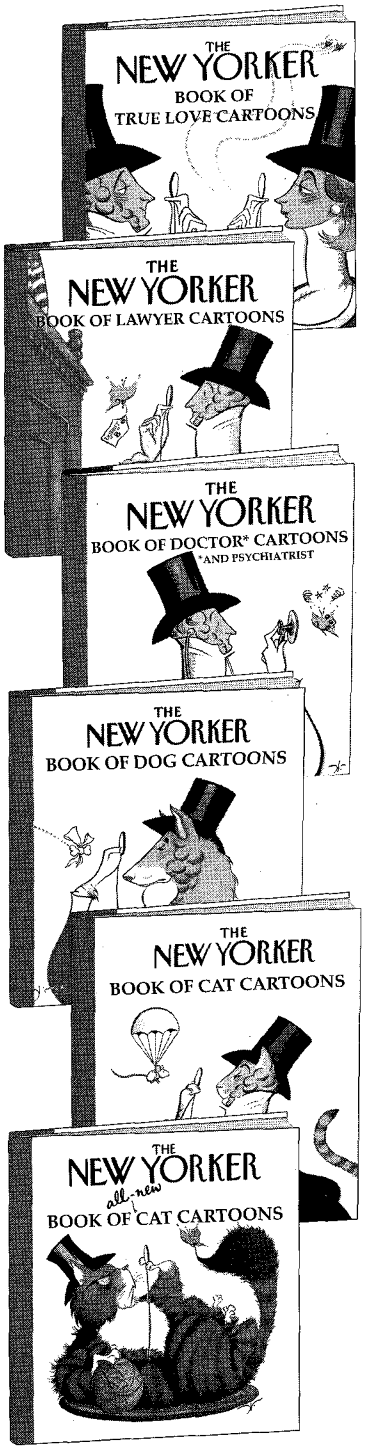

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there to eat and drink and talk, and the piano is almost an afterthought. It sits on the floor hard by a low wall that separates the huge main room from the thundering bar. Charlap's first number on his third night was a medium-tempo version of Kurt Weill's "Here I'll Stay." It was full of backpedalling chords, loose, almost atonal single-note lines, and a couple of mercurial arpeggios. The din in the place was palpable, but Charlap's passion for his music was immediately clear in his playing and in his bobbing, tightly masked face, which stayed a foot or so above the keyboard. Six people near the piano clapped at the end of the tune. His next number, Gerry Mulligan's "Curtains," got eight claps, and Irving Berlin's "The Best Thing for You" got ten. Cole Porter's "All Through the Night," played at an up tempo, was the last number in the set, and, when it began, a heavy, middle-aged, wool-wrapped Irish couple stood up in the bar to leave, stopped ten feet from the piano, and listened, their big Irish faces still and pleased. They clapped twice before they left, and there were twelve more claps from the main room. Charlap has said of the Knickerbocker, "It's a great place to practice when you're not working that night."

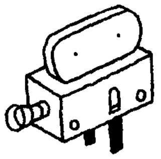
In the meantime, before Charlap's next New York gig (with Phil Woods at the Iridium, early in June, and with his trio at Zinno later in the month), find his newest CD, "All Through the Night" (Criss Cross), and listen carefully to the start of the second full chorus on Alec Wilder's "It's So Peaceful in the Country." Charlap, leaving a beautifully chorded and measured melody chorus, steps off into a handful of unevenly spaced single notes, a firm four/four rhythm underneath, and the earth suddenly moves. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

YOUNG BLOOD

Teen pics that an adult could enjoy.

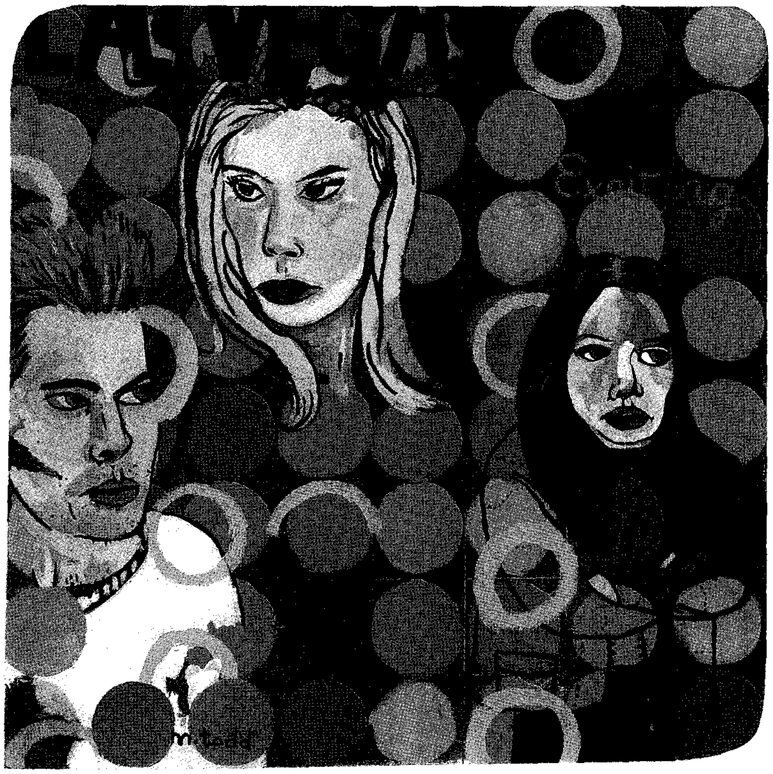
BY ANTHONY LANE



THE new Doug Liman film is called "Go," although why I have no idea. Does it herald a summer initiative from Columbia—a clever way to cut the marketing budget by arranging for movie titles to include their own promotional advice? If so, I am looking forward to "Buy Ticket," "Laugh at Funny Bits," and "If You Must Make Out in the Back, Keep It Quiet." The film is set on Christmas Eve in Los Angeles—not in some dead zone, like Beverly Hills, but in those more rumpled fringes of the city which are occupied by real people who still have their own faces. There is Ronna (Sarah Polley), who works as a supermarket clerk, though she also has the basic American urge to rise above her circumstances and become something higher and finer: in her case, a drug dealer. She buys twenty tabs of Ecstasy from a seedy type named Todd (Timothy Olyphant) and tries to turn a profit by selling them to a couple of clean-cut boys, Zack (Jay Mohr) and Adam (Scott Wolf). Needless to say, Ronna's flawless plan turns into one long flaw, at the end of which she has a contretemps with a small yellow sports car and comes off much the worse.

At this point, the movie shifts into reverse. We zip back to the opening scene at the supermarket, gloss over Ronna, and start looking into the mysterious case of Simon (Desmond Askew), a carrot-haired British colleague of hers. He takes off for Las Vegas with a carload of buddies and winds up, as one invariably does on these occasions, having Tantric intercourse with a pair of stoned bridesmaids. Pausing only to set fire to a hotel room, he gets thoroughly lap-danced, pulls a gun on a heavy, enjoys a ride in a stolen Ferrari, and skips town; what is impressive about Simon is that he packs all these innocent pleasures into the same length of time that most of his compatriots would take to brew a nice strong pot of tea. Once again, however, Liman does not rest on his character's laurels; he returns to the starting point and follows a third track—the tale of Adam and Zack. How did they get into this mess? And why, exactly, is the sleek narcotics cop Burke (William Fichtner) inviting them home for dinner?

When you describe the zigzags of Liman's plot, they give the ominous impression of a hectic picaresque. In practice, though, they seem anything but rushed. As he proved in his last picture, "Swingers," Liman has a gentle grip on the beats and riffs of simply hanging out and talking—to yourself, if nobody else is around. In the opening exchange, Ronna's friend Claire (Katie Holmes) says to Todd, "I'm not saying this is anything it's not," but the entire film defies her. Ronna is plainly in the wrong game; Simon's friend Marcus (Taye Diggs), clad in a deafening jacket, takes the Ferrari only because somebody confuses him with a valet-parking attendant; and Adam and Zack are convinced that they are heading for a shattering bout of group sex, when what is actually on offer is an enticing chance to join the home-furnishings market. Well, we all make mistakes.



The sweet now: Timothy Olyphant, Sarah Polley, and Katie Holmes in "Go."

The most promising fool is Tiny (Breckin Meyer), another member of the Vegas crew, who believes that he, a white boy, is essentially black. He uses black slang and everything, but, as Marcus points out, "If you were any less black you'd be clear." Such wishful folly is close to Liman's heart (remember the wonderful voice-mail sequence in "Swingers," in which Jon Favreau blundered through the arc of a relationship, from come-on to split-up, by leaving a stream of messages in the void); the trouble with the new film is that the racial joke goes nowhere. It lights up and dies, as does the news that Adam and Zack are soap-opera actors by trade—surely a hook for some useful stage business. Liman is so intent on the structural intricacies of his piece, on tying up the ends, that he lets the more colorful strands elude his grasp. It was Tarantino who re-started the portmanteau picture, with "Pulp Fiction," snipping and snagging together a bundle of different stories. He lent them a cool coherence by pulling the tension tight, whereas Liman is a more casual customer, and his casting back and forth seems whimsical, lightly laid onto the fabric of the film. The moral appears to be: Here are some cute folks, and this is how

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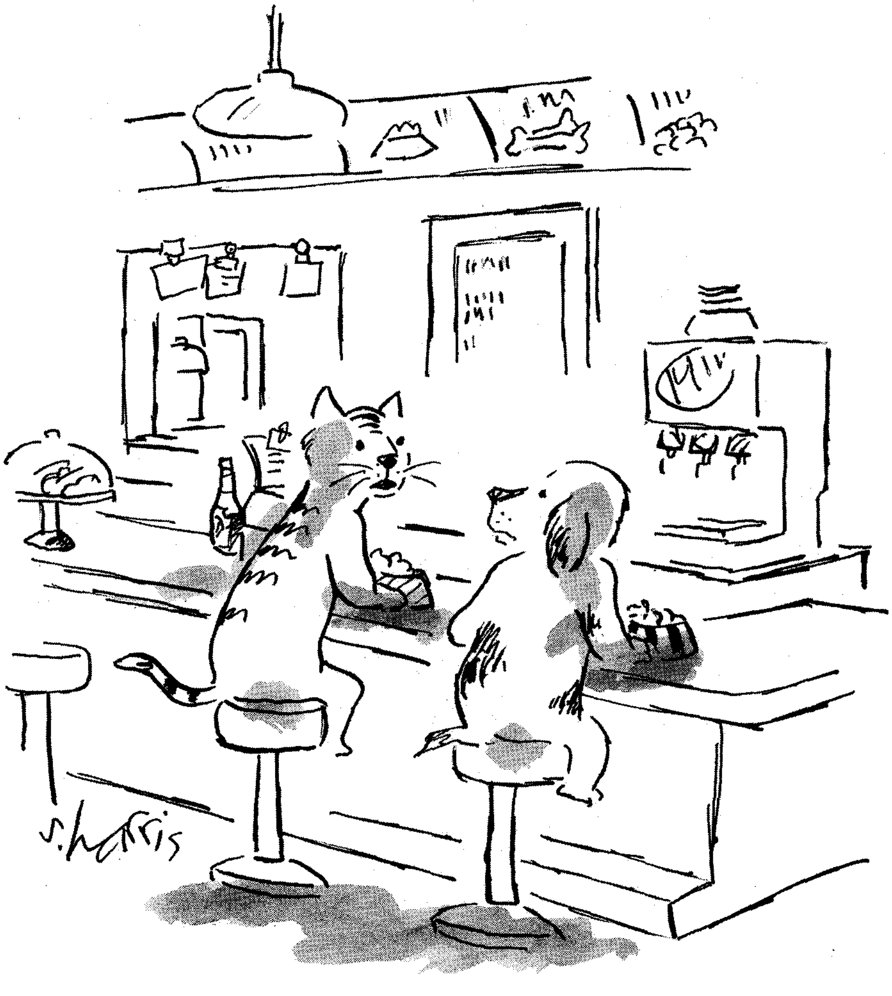
they foul up the season of good cheer.

And how cute they are. Even the ruthless Todd wears a Santa Claus hat, and his attempt to make love with Claire on the staircase is overseen by a cat. Polley, after her performance in "The Sweet Hereafter," is a slight disappointment as Ronna—she looks lank and bored—but there is an affability to Liman's actors that makes you both warm to his movie and scoff at its pretensions to true grit. When Simon fires the gun and when Zack drives himself to the brink of murder, you simply don't believe them; if Liman wanted to make Los Angeles look vicious, he has been badly betrayed by his own charm. He can't help stumbling into the sweet beforehand and the sweet now—the wanna-be dopehead, for instance, who murmurs "It's like a wave" while tasting the rush of a pill no more potent than aspirin, or the friend of Ronna's who celebrates Christmas by hanging tinsel inside his car. The automobile, in fact, feels like Liman's natural habitat—a place for guys to get along, in every sense—just as Las Vegas is his most convincing idea of a good joke. Where else can you go with head held high, in the bracing knowledge that you will soon be retreating with your tail between your legs, or, if you are Simon, with your crunched rear fender just behind your knees?

I HAD a good time at "Go," as I did at James Merendino's new work, "SLC Punk!"—or, at any rate, as good a time as you can expect to have when the overriding effect of a movie is to make you feel ninety-one years old. Almost everyone in these films is insultingly young, and the characters buzz with a level of stamina that allows them to tumble into trouble and come out wide-awake and smiling on the other side. The same may be true of any teen pic, yet there's a maturity of ambition about Liman and Merendino which gives their work heft, and they somehow manage to smuggle in a shrewd dose of emotional education. The teen-pic industry is rampant just now, what



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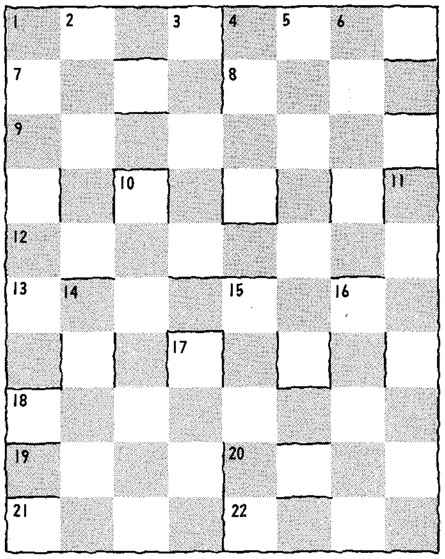
with "Varsity Blues," "Cruel Intentions," Adam Sandler nerdfests, and the self-replenishing "Scream" series, but all those movies seem so proudly lightweight, and their targeting of a precise audience—their downright hostility, indeed, toward any viewer older than the characters—is so brazen that one is tempted to hang back and just let them get on with it.

"SLC Punk!" may be tangled and often self-indulgent, yet its breadth of tone is a rebuff to the cowardice of the teen pic. It stars Matthew Lillard, who made his name in "Scream," but this is more of a stretch: he is smart, winning, and rueful, or as rueful as a man can be with hair of cobalt blue. The title is clunky, although it does contain useful information; until now, I had no idea there *were* any punks in Salt Lake City. Historically, the place has been associated with a zealous spiritual desire to win the hearts of all those dirty officials on the Olympic Committee, and, before that, with the Mormons, but "SLC Punk!" was my first intimation that head-butting could itself be considered a winter sport. Lillard plays Stevo, who looks back on his misspent youth in the nineteen-eighties: "If the guy I was then met the guy I am now, he'd beat the shit out of him."

Merendino can't resist the tug of visual restlessness, and we get put through the hoops—jump-cutting, delivery to camera, wondrous overhead abstractions of the Salt Lake itself, and a very funny slide show about the reasons that people fight. That last scene is a giveaway; the movie would dearly love to thrash around in sex and violence, but the punk fury keeps modulating into comic endearments. Stevo has a pal (the excellent Michael Goorjian) who's called Heroin Bob, although he can't actually muster the courage to take any drugs. The two of them are hopeless revolutionaries, which makes their kinship all the more touching and its cold, unheroic climax all the more of a wrench. Whether teen-agers will line up to watch "Go" and "SLC Punk!" is open to question, but their parents, if they don't mind a little cacophony, should check these movies out, if only to remind themselves that their horrible offpring, especially those with Mohawk haircuts, are pleasantly tractable after ll. The Sex Pistols promised Anarchy n the U.K., but, as Stevo points out, hat good is that if you live in Utah? ♦

8 x 10 CRYPTIC

NO. 85 BY PATRICK BERRY



ACROSS

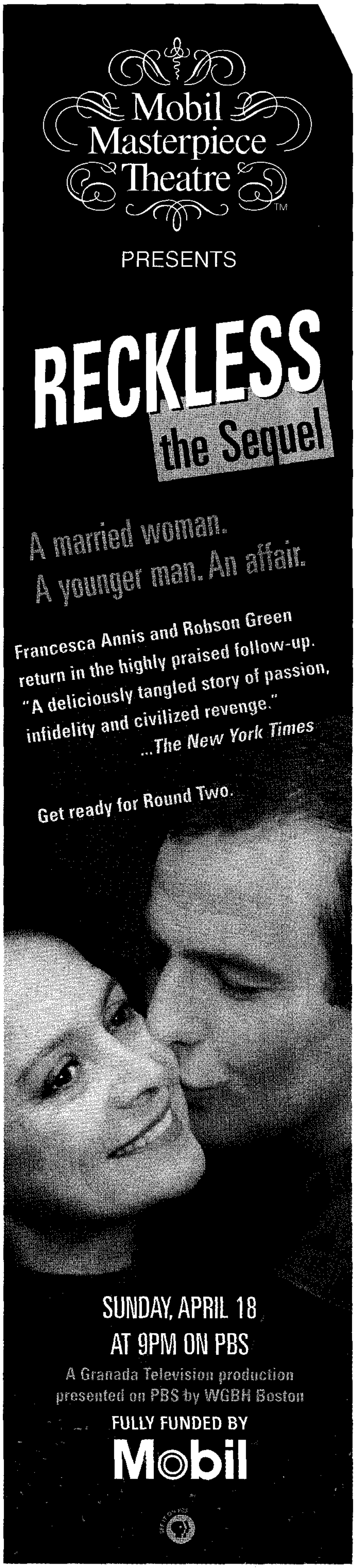
- **1** Little Richard embraces Clapton (4)
- **4** Restaurant lost face (4)
- **7** Jay North amid group of stars (4)
- **8** Speaker's poem was short (4)
- **9** California city's supply caught in cyclone (8)
- **12** Former partner's opening one no-trump: a sign of power (8)
- **13** Coal pile tossed into set of steam pipes? (8)
- **18** Famous economist has turned to political speeches (8)
- **19** Charge, bearing ram's head on the house (4)
- **20** Crackers cool off (4)
- **21** For the audience, screen Jekyll's counterpart (4)
- **22** Envisioned 7 minus 5 (4)

DOWN

- **1** Sampling of gumbo eaten by drunk Creole painter (2,5)
- **2** Unbend twisted axle beneath end of car (5)
- **3** Huge bird clipped building (5)
- **4** Fish with a tail (4)
- **5** Familiar with enemy, retreating after a battle (5,2)
- **6** Criminal put half of loot in swamp (5)
- **10** Spread out, and led a spy astray (7)
- **11** Squashes relative (7)
- **14** A really animated cartoonist (5)
- **15** Rock solid statues (5)
- **16** Heard harmony in composition (5)
- **17** Ken Kesey has this oddly positioned joint (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 84 appears on page 99. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.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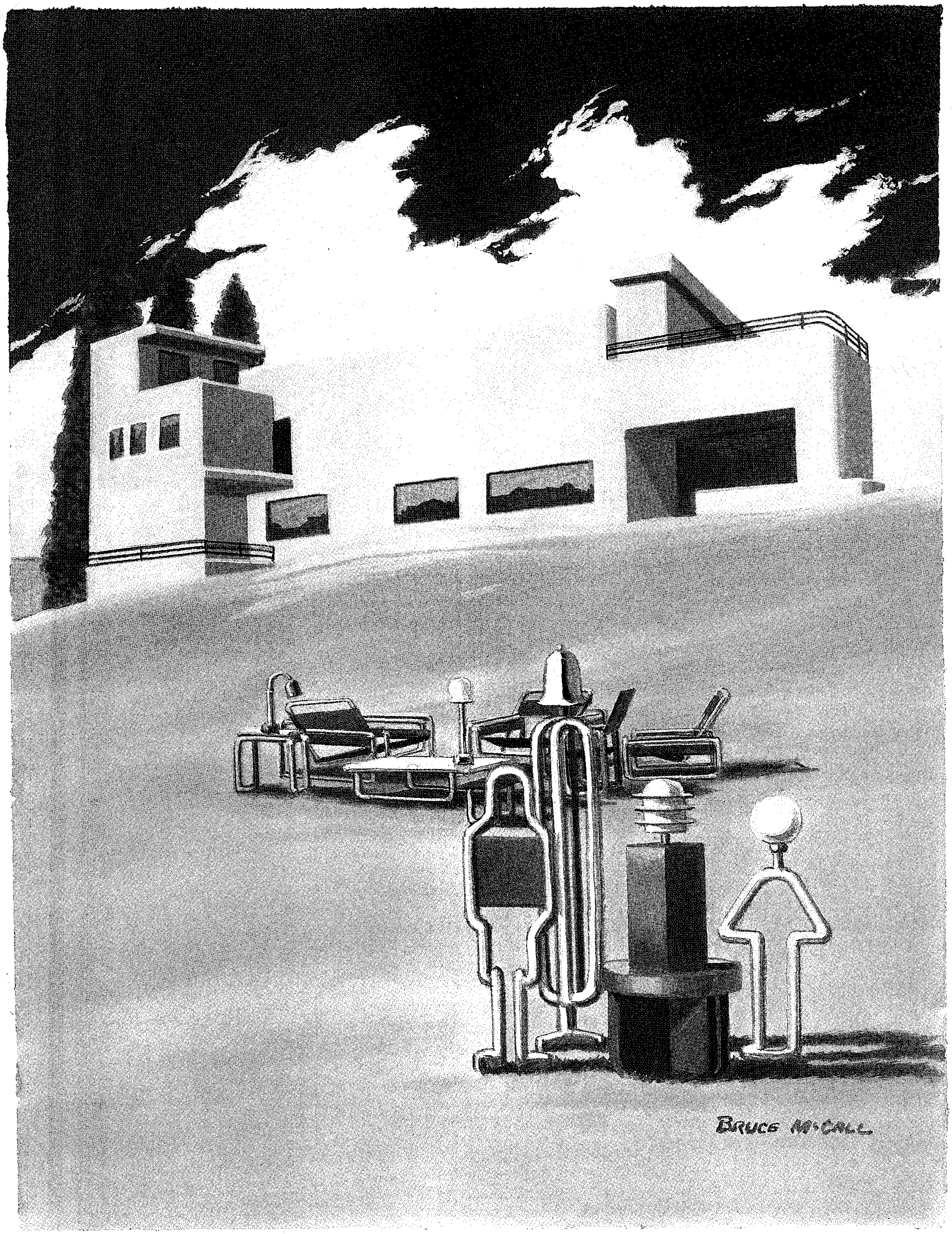
FOUNDERS' DAY AT THE BAUHAUS


BRUCE McCALL

Left to right: Moholy-Nagy, Gropius, Breuer, Mies van der Rohe.

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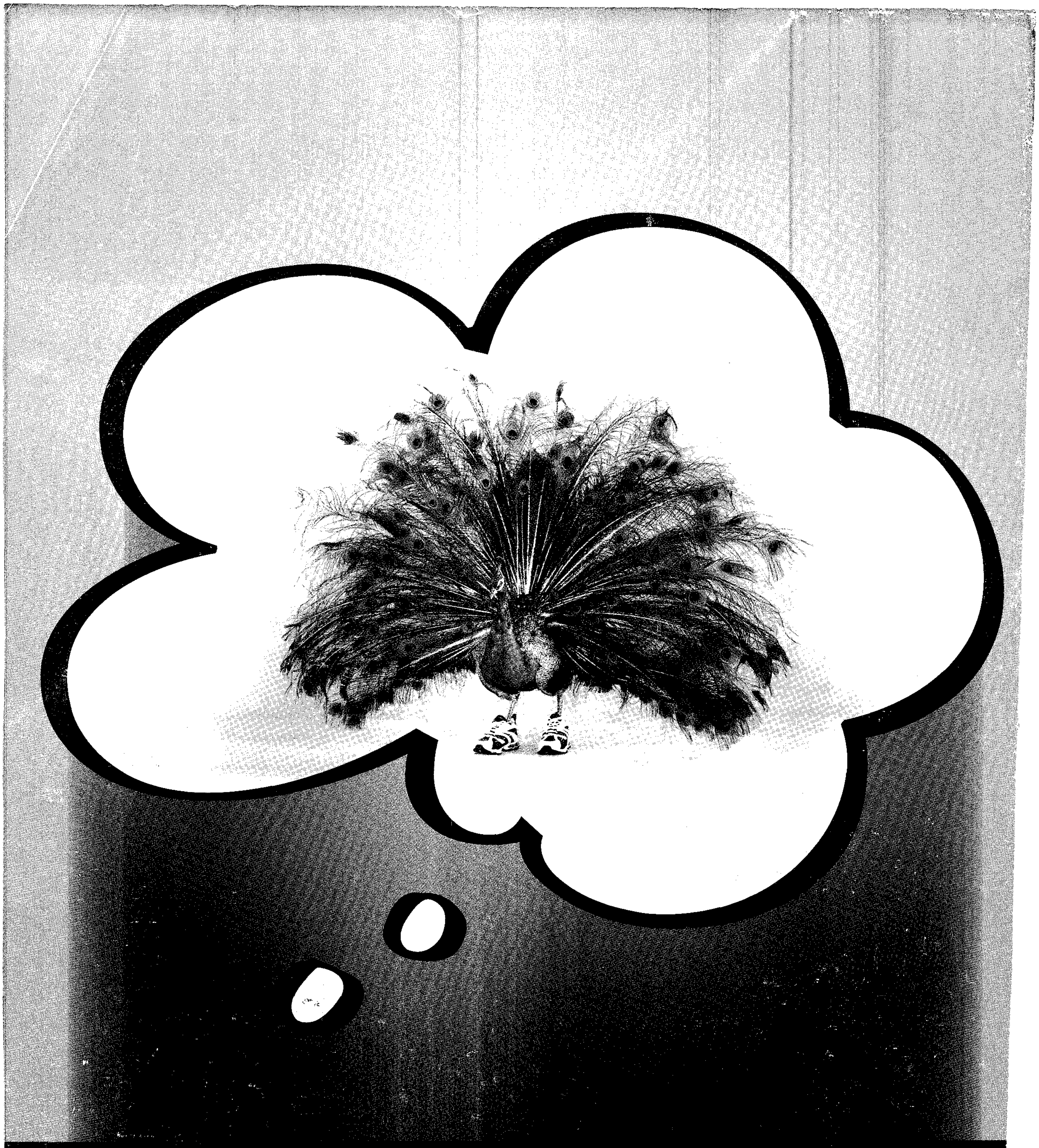

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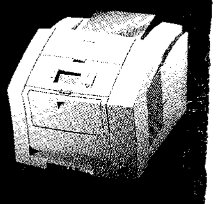

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